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AGENDA

Shahak may be next envoy to US

Another name has recently been added to the list of possible candidates being bandied about the State Department in Washington to replace Ambassador Eliyahu Ben-Elissar: Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.

Rumors have reached the top floor of the building, adjacent to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's offices, that the name of the outgoing chief of staff has been raised by the Prime Minister's Office as a suitable candidate for the position and a fitting temptation for Shahak in order to distance him from independent political activity in coming years.

The source claims that Shahak has already been approached unofficially by a senior official who has also reported the proposal to the Americans. This, despite the fact that the Prime Minister's Office still regards former ambassador Zalmay Shoval and UN Ambassador Dore Gold as its leading candidates for the job.

It should be said that Shahak is held in high regard in Washington. He is considered to be thorough, does not make hasty decisions, and does his homework carefully before attending any meeting, regardless of whether it relates to military aspects of the political process, purchasing, or strategic coordination between Israel's defense establishment and that of the US.

If there is still uncertainty in Washington as to who the new ambassador will be, it would seem that on one subject views are unanimous: the incumbent ambassador is reaching the end of his term.

This is an embarrassing situation. Even Ben-Elissar's fiercest critics admit that he has never received the support of the prime minister, which could initially have assisted him in the difficult absorption process in the cruel US capital.

If a decision has indeed been made to recall the ambassador, it should be announced as soon as possible, putting an end to the rumors. If a decision has been made to leave him in Washington for an additional period, he then deserves the full support of the prime minister so that the gossip which is currently making it impossible for him to function can cease.

After Pessah

There was uncertainty in Washington this week as to whether peace coordinator Dennis Ross would return to the area after the Pessah break, as had previously been planned.

See AGENDA, Page 22



Ahmed Katamesh hugs his daughter Haneen on his return to Ramallah yesterday after spending over five years in prison. (AP)

Longest-serving detainee released

By STEVE RODAN
and MOHAMMED NABIS

The IDF yesterday released a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leader who had been held for more than five years in administrative detention. He was released after he signed a pledge that he would not be connected to violent activity against Israel.

Ahmed Katamesh, 45, from El Bireh, who was the longest-held administrative detainee, received an enthusiastic welcome from his family and supporters as he arrived home with his attorney Jawad Boulous.

Katamesh was arrested on

September 1, 1992, and transferred to administrative detention in October 1993.

"I'm sad regarding those who are still in jail because of the policy of administrative detention," he said. "Even during the racist regime in South Africa, there were arrests for only six months."

Palestinian sources said the release of Katamesh and his colleague, Hassan Fatafta, came as a result of efforts by the Palestinian Authority's Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). Boulous refused to confirm this.

"Katamesh has nothing to say in response to any reference to a deal,"

Boulous said. "He is just a prisoner who sought his freedom and it's high time that he was released."

For his part, Fatafta said he

refused to sign any agreement with Israel.

See RELEASED, Page 19

Two US congressmen: Iran has nuclear arms

By STEVE RODAN

Two US House members who have closely followed Teheran's military programs say Iran has obtained nuclear weapons as well as established a ballistic missile command and control system to launch them. They have called on the Clinton administration to draft a new policy that reflects

Teheran's capability.

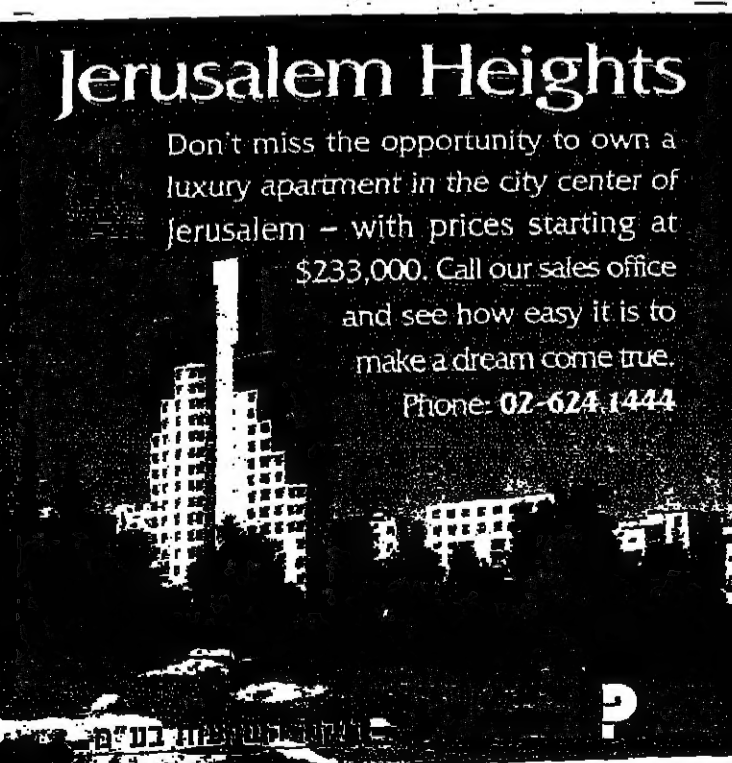
The assertion was the first by Congress members that deemed Iran as possessing nuclear weapons, in contrast to spokesmen of the Pentagon and State Department who maintain that Teheran has not achieved such capability.

See IRAN, Page 19

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1st-quarter inflation only 0.1%

By DAVID HARRIS
and Jerusalem Post Staff

Inflation in the first quarter of the year totaled at 0.1 percent, compared to 2.6% in the same period last year, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced yesterday.

The consumer price index declined 0.2% in March - the fifth negative monthly index in the past seven months - leaving the index at 153.2 points. At its current pace, 1998 inflation is now expected to be between 4% and 5%. Over the previous 12 months, inflation has been 4.4%.

The most significant among a host of sectors which saw price declines was the closely watched housing market. Apartment prices for buyers last month saw a 0.5% decrease according to the housing index, while rental rates declined 0.8%.

At least some of the drop in housing prices reflected a weaker dollar, according to David Neumann, spokesman for the Central Bureau of Statistics. Last

month's index does not span the recent days' volatility in the currency markets, which shaved some 4% off of the shekel's dollar value.

Despite the shekel's fluctuations this month, Neumann cautioned against assuming that April's CPI will be particularly high on the basis of the shekel's depreciation.

"Yes, the dollar has increased in recent days, but first of all note [Wednesday's] decline in the dollar's value, and secondly the dollar is only one of many components that make up the CPI," said Neumann.

The shekel clawed back 0.798% against the dollar and 0.53% against the Bank of Israel's basket of major currencies during trading yesterday, leaving them at NIS 3.72 and NIS 3.9939 respectively.

A senior Bank of Israel source said yesterday's currency trading proved that the panic of recent days was unwarranted.

See INFLATION, Page 19

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NEWS

in brief

Albright calls Netanyahu in Eilat

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu interrupted his vacation in the Eilat area yesterday to answer a telephone call from US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The conversation, which lasted nearly 20 minutes, dealt with the impending return of US peace envoy Dennis Ross and other subjects which were not disclosed by either of the parties.

Netanyahu was visiting the Hai-Bar reserve near Kibbutz Yotvata when the call came. He took it inside a communications van which accompanied him throughout the tour.

The State Department said that Ross plans to travel to the region next Friday.

Jay Bushinsky

Mubarak calls on US to push peace process

President Hosni Mubarak yesterday called on the United States to release its own proposals for pushing forward the stalled Middle East peace process.

"I hope that they release the initiative immediately," Mubarak said after meeting with Syrian President Hafez Assad, who arrived in Cairo on an unannounced visit. The Clinton administration "is doing its best, but there are influences on it," Mubarak said.

In Jordan, King Hussein called the US proposal a step forward. "The American proposal did not reach the level that would meet our expectations, but in all it was a prod to the peace process and a big step towards attaining peace," Hussein said in a televised letter.

AP

US defense secretary to visit

US Secretary of Defense William Cohen is to visit Israel on Monday during a Middle East tour. Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai will host Cohen at the ministry in Tel Aviv and is expected to push for a US commitment to widen the strategic cooperation between the two countries, defense sources said.

Mordechai also will lay out the IDF's long-term modernization plans and ask for a continued US commitment to maintaining Israel's qualitative edge in weaponry.

This will be the fifth time that Mordechai and Cohen will meet, but the first time that Cohen will be in Israel in his present position. He had been scheduled to visit Israel last December, but that tour was canceled for what the Americans said were "domestic reasons."

Artie O'Sullivan

Bicyclist killed near Caesarea

A man riding a bicycle was killed near the Caesarea intersection when he was hit by a car yesterday morning. Police did not reveal his identity or details of the crash.

Seven people were injured when two cars collided head-on near Kibbutz Dovrat on the Afula-Kfar Tavor Road yesterday afternoon. One of the injured was reported to be in serious condition. Police said a car veered from its lane and crashed into an oncoming car. The police said it is investigating the circumstances of the accident. A tractor-driver, 27, was in critical condition and a 16-year-old boy in serious condition when their tractor overturned near Kedumim in the Ben Shimon Forest area yesterday.

Irini

Germany warns soldiers of neo-Nazi dangers

The German army yesterday launched an exhibition to warn soldiers about the dangers of right-wing extremism, using a display of Nazi memorabilia and neo-Nazi propaganda.

In the wake of a spate of right-wing incidents among its ranks and files, the army said it aimed to make German soldiers aware of the ways extremist groups prey on the young and the ignorant.

The exhibition will tour about 30 military bases in Germany up to May next year. Objects on display range from Nazi booty such as daggers, flags and badges, to modern-day neo-Nazi and right-wing propaganda pamphlets, T-shirts and Internet websites used by extremist groups.

Reuters

Tudjman tells Bentsur:

Croatia asked for Sakic's extradition

By JAY BUSHINSKY

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman notified visiting Foreign Ministry Director-General Eytan Bentsur yesterday that he has asked for the extradition from Argentina of Dinko Sakic, the wartime commandant of the Jasenovac death camp.

Tudjman's move came 24 hours after the Yugoslav government submitted evidence of Sakic's alleged involvement in crimes against humanity to the Argentine authorities.

Of the estimated 500,000 persons who perished in Jasenovac, almost all were citizens of Yugoslavia, which then comprised Croatia as well, and 20,000 were Yugoslav Jews. The camp originally was used as a place of internment for members of the anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi resistance. Most of its victims were Serbs, but Croats and Gypsies also died there.

Bentsur welcomed Croatia's decision to request Sakic's extradition. Foreign Ministry spokesman Aviv Shir-On said.

The meeting was held at Tudjman's initiative. Shir-On went on, noting that he used the opportunity "to clarify his position and that of democratic Croatia which condemns the country's Ustashi-Fascist regime and especially the crimes it committed



Croatian President Franjo Tudjman (left) meets with Foreign Ministry Director-General Eytan Bentsur in Zagreb yesterday.

against the Jews." Bentsur was asked before his departure for Belgrade and Zagreb by the Simon Wiesenthal Center's director in Israel, Efraim Zuroff, to raise the Sakic case and to seek his extradition to Croatia.

"We think there is great significance in there being a trial of an Ustashi leader in Croatia," Zuroff said. "It would contribute to the elucidation of the Croats' role in Nazi Germany's 'Final Solution of the Jewish Problem.'"

Reports from Buenos Aires indicate that an arrest warrant was issued by Argentina's justice ministry, but Sakic evidently has not yet been taken into custody.

Zuroff said he also urged Bentsur to discuss the contents

of Tudjman's book, the original edition of which reportedly contains references to the Holocaust that minimize its extent and consequences. Tudjman deleted these passages in subsequent editions.

Egypt, Syria: Israel must leave Lebanon without conditions

CAIRO (Reuters) - Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his Syrian counterpart Hafez Assad yesterday rejected Israel's conditions for a pullout from south Lebanon.

The two leaders told a news conference after lengthy talks in Cairo that Israel had to leave the southern strip it occupies without asking for anything in return, as stipulated in UN Security Council Resolution 425.

Jay Bushinsky adds: Prime Minister Netanyahu's communications adviser David Bar-Ilan said Assad's visit to Egypt was "an effort to dissuade Lebanon from negotiating Israel's withdrawal."

He said we can point to the absurdity of Arab regimes resisting Israel's desire to withdraw from their territory."

Israel has lodged two complaints to the five-nation committee charged with monitoring the understandings reached after Operation Grapes of Wrath two years ago, the IDF spokesman said yesterday.

The first complaint was over Hizbullah firing on Tuesday at the village of Reban in which a Lebanese girl was wounded. The second was over Hizbullah firing, also on Tuesday, from inside Nabatiya at an IDF post.

Egyptian newspapers said yesterday that Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri is due to visit Egypt next week. Cairo has said it would back Lebanon's stance on the Israeli proposal to withdraw IDF troops from south Lebanon.

Jay Bushinsky adds: Prime Minister Netanyahu's communications adviser David Bar-Ilan said Assad's visit to Egypt was "an effort to dissuade Lebanon from negotiating Israel's withdrawal."

He said we can point to the absurdity of Arab regimes resisting Israel's desire to withdraw from their territory."

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PA arrests nine Islamist students

The Palestinian Police has arrested nine Islamist university students who took part in a Hamas rally in Gaza earlier this month, university sources said yesterday.

They said the students belonged to the "Islamic bloc" and also formed the student council of Gaza's Islamic University.

Palestinian police in Nabulus on Monday arrested 12 university students who took part in an anti-Israel rally last week.

The arrests were the latest in a crackdown that followed charges and counter-charges by Hamas and the PA over who killed Hamas bombmaker Muhi Sharif last month.

Sharif was killed in a Hamas attack on a bus carrying Israeli soldiers in Gaza.

The PA shut the bureau last Thursday and imposed restrictions on Gaza-based Reuters journalists after the news agency distributed a videotape from Hamas accusing

the PA of involvement in Sharif's murder.

PA Secretary-General Tayeb Abdel-Rahim said after meeting Reuters representatives: "After discussing the issue of the video and other Hamas statements which come from abroad, relations have returned to normal between the Palestinian Authority and Reuters."

"There are grounds for cooperation in favor of credibility and accuracy. Therefore, the Reuters office in Gaza has been reopened and the staff there have been allowed to resume work with all freedom in respect for freedom of the press."

In a statement from London, David Rogers, Reuters Editor for Europe, Middle East and Africa, said: "We are pleased that misunderstandings have been cleared up. We are satisfied we will now be able to report events from Gaza and the West Bank without any impediment."

(News agencies)

Third Way wants pullback in populated areas

By LIAT COLLINS

The Third Way is unhappy about the delay in the second redeployment but does not want to make an ultimatum. The party platform calls for "peaceful separation from the Palestinians," and members are

reportedly concerned that the government is not heading in this direction.

Internal Security Minister and Third Way leader Avigdor Kahalani is initiating a cabinet discussion on the issue.

Meanwhile, a growing dispute

between the party and members of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza over what areas should be handed to the Palestinians made a big splash in the media yesterday.

Beit El council head Uri Ariel has warned the Third Way in a letter that its stand of handing over to the Palestinians areas next to Jewish settlements but not unpopulated areas and the Judean Desert will be responsible for bloodshed if it is accepted.

Ariel said the Third Way stand on the redeployment also harms the party's raison d'être - against withdrawal from the Golan Heights. He said a protest is planned on Tuesday outside the Prime Minister's Office during the scheduled visit by US special envoy Dennis Ross.

Third Way whip Yehuda Harel said in response that "anyone who decides to be active in fateful, historic decisions is taking on a heavy responsibility, but there is no choice."

He said the party would not make an ultimatum or set a deadline, "because that would help the other side."

Third Way MK Alex Lubotzky said the changes wrought by the Oslo Accords by creating Palestinian autonomous areas means small Jewish communities next to major concentrations of Arabs, such as the settlements next to Jenin, should be handed over to the Palestinians to further the separation, while open and uninhabited areas should remain under IDF control to leave Israel the largest possible territory.

Council head Aharon Domb said this approach would place scores of communities at the same sort of risk as Netzanim and Kfar Darom in Gaza.

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Final witness to testify in US teen hearing

The final defense witness will testify next month on behalf of a teenage Maryland murder suspect fighting extradition to the United States, his lawyer said yesterday.

The 17-year-old suspect is charged in Montgomery County, Maryland, in the slaying of 19-year-old Alfred Tello Jr.

He has claimed Israeli citizenship, on the basis of his father being an Israeli, to keep from being renounced to the United States for trial.

The youth's attorney, former justice minister David Liba'i, said the final witness in his extradition hearing will testify May 3 in Jerusalem District Court.

The witness will be an Israeli man who lived near the youth's family in Tel Aviv 50 years ago, Liba'i said. He said the man would testify that when the family left Israel for the United States, they left their furniture in their apartment and said they intended to return.

The family kept the Tel Aviv apartment for two more years, Liba'i said.

Meanwhile, in Maryland Tuesday a prosecutor tried to convince Montgomery County Circuit Court Judge Paul H. Weinstein to throw out a statement allegedly made by the youth.

According to Assistant State's Attorney James Trusty, the teenager called his brother five days after the killing. *The Washington Post* reported. He told his brother that he and a second teenager were talking with Tello in a parked car when he showed some money and Tello pointed a shotgun at him. The second youth began punching Tello and, during a struggle over the shotgun, he said he found a phone cord in the car's back seat and strangled Tello.

The judge postponed a ruling until at least today.

The second teenager goes on trial next week in Maryland for the slaying. (AP)



Stopping to smell the flowers

A girl checks out the flowers on display at the flower show at Kfar Hamaccabiah yesterday.

(Yael Somakh/Israel Sun)

Jordan River boating site closed after fatal accident

By DAVID RUDGE

The Upper Galilee Regional Council has ordered a temporary cessation of boating activities on the stretch of the Jordan River where nine-year-old Ishai Scop from Netanya drowned on Tuesday and his mother was injured.

The operators of the site, Rafting Nahar Hayarden, said that despite their deep sorrow over the tragedy, there is no justification for stopping boating.

In an announcement issued to the media and broadcast on Israel Radio, the management noted that the company began rafting activities on the Jordan River 10 years ago. Over those years an experienced and professional team of instructors had been built up which acted in accordance with the safety regulations laid down by the regional council and the company, it said.

Hundreds of people were at the site yesterday and boating activities went ahead as usual. Visitors said they had been given proper instructions and guidance.

Nevertheless, Upper Galilee Regional Council head Aharon Valenci said the council was issuing a temporary cessation order, under municipal by-laws.

"The company was informed verbally on the same day as the tragedy and we have since sent them a letter to cease boating activities," said Valenci. "It's quite possible that the permits are in order and that everything was done in accordance with regulations and safety precautions, but something happened that has to be examined—and until that is done we feel the rafting activities should cease," he said.

Meanwhile, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani yesterday praised the efforts of the country's six Civil Guard voluntary rescue units all year round, but particularly during the Pessah vacation.

He told members of the units—Golan Heights, Western Galilee, Ein Gedi, Central Arava, Har Hanegev, and Megillot—he would do everything possible to help them meet their needs. He also called on hikers not to take chances and to follow instructions.

Swiss: Mossad brought tools in diplomatic bag

BERN — Mossad agents used a diplomatic bag to bring espionage tools into Switzerland for a failed wiretapping operation in February, Swiss Federal Prosecutor Carla del Ponte said yesterday.

The Mossad agent detained after the incident in the Swiss capital was caught with the bag in his possession of the bag, she said.

The agent will remain in custody until further notice while a federal examining magistrate continues the investigation, said Del Ponte.

The defendant was one of five Mossad agents caught trying to bug a small suburban apartment block, Swiss officials said. The other four were released after several hours of questioning by police.

"The defendant has admitted to some of the charges against him," said a statement from Del Ponte's office.

Del Ponte didn't confirm who the target of the Mossad operation was, but said that person hadn't denied "sympathies with certain organiza-

tions."

Last month, a Lebanese-born Swiss citizen thought to have been the target denied he has any links with the Hizbullah organization.

Investigations showed that three Mossad agents, including the one still detained, made a visit to the

apartment block in January using a duplicate key they had made, said the prosecutor's office.

Six people were involved in the February operation, the statement confirmed. In a Bern restaurant, the five who actually carried out the operation received the tools from a

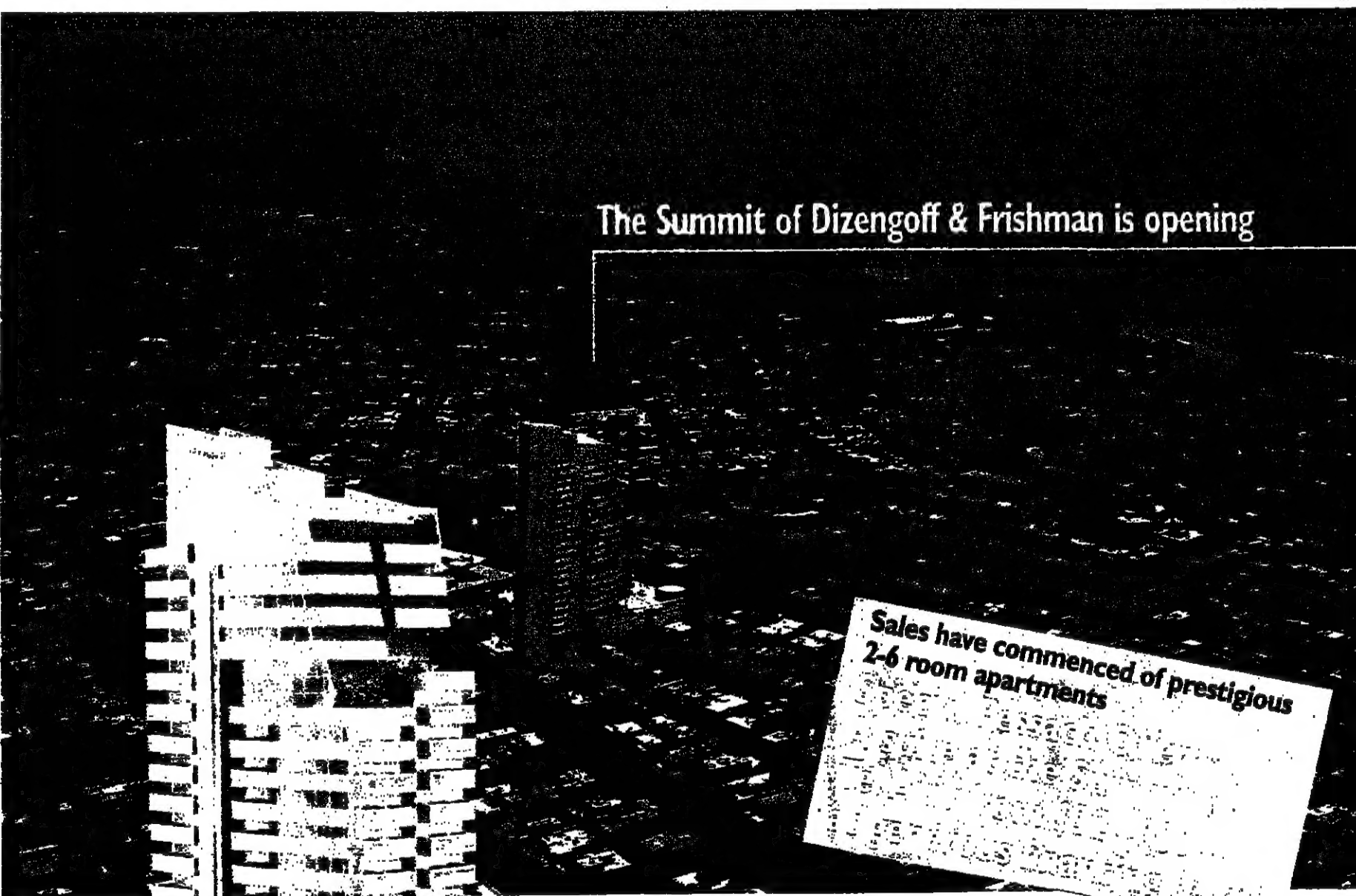
person known only as the "sixth man."

Jay Bushinsky adds:

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Aviv Shir-On said Israel's missions in Bern and Geneva "had nothing to do with this affair."

(AP)

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NEWS

in brief

Police question Hussein

Jerusalem Police questioned Faisal Hussein, the Palestinian Authority minister responsible for Jerusalem affairs, yesterday after they arrested an Orient House guard with a fake ID and a weapon belonging to Hussein. Jarouf Majad told police that he had gotten the weapon from Hussein's home in Jericho. Hussein told the Jerusalem police's minority unit that the PA security forces do not operate in Jerusalem. Hussein also told police that he has received a number of death threats recently. *Tim*

Jordan, Israel agree on terminal at joint airport

Jordan has accepted an Israeli proposal to build a terminal for the joint airport the two countries are running at the Gulf of Akaba. Israeli Embassy spokesman Roey Gilad said yesterday the terminal would be built on the Israeli side of the border, which is 500 meters from the runway of Jordan's Akaba International Airport. Gilad said the new terminal is expected to cost \$10 million. Israel will finance it, but Jordan will pay for the building of a road between the two terminals. *AP*

US representatives slam Cook

Fourteen members of the US House of Representatives wrote British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Tuesday to lambast his foreign secretary Robin Cook for creating a controversy during last month's visit to Israel and to urge Blair to play a more positive role when he visits in May. Cook's controversial stop at Har Homa was one of his "poor political calculations" that set the peace process back and "inflicted severe damage" on Israel's relations with the EU, the letter stated. Far from advancing its position in the peace process, Cook's fumbles "only bolster the belief that the EU is biased toward Palestinian interests," it added. The representatives went on to express hope that when Blair visits Israel, he "will use the opportunity to enhance relations between the EU and Israel and to commit Great Britain to a supportive and fair role in the Middle East." *Hillel Kuttler*

Bentsur to visit Cyprus

Foreign Ministry Director-General Eytan Bentsur is expected to visit Cyprus on April 24. During the visit he will exchange views and information with his counterpart in Nicosia, Alecos Shampos. Ambassador Euripedes Evriviades, who will be in the Cypriot capital during Bentsur's one-day stay, welcomed the director-general's recent comments in favor of his government's call for the demilitarization of the divided island. Evriviades said that under such circumstances there will be no need for the Russian S-300 surface-to-air missiles which Nicosia has ordered "because Turkish warplanes constantly intrude on our air space and intimidate our citizens by deliberately flying low overhead." *Jay Bushinsky*

Court extends Lebanese man's remand

The Lod Military Appeals Court yesterday extended the remand of Ali Ahmed Banjek of Lebanon by six days, after he was first acquitted earlier in the week of charges including membership in Hizbullah and firing Katyusha rockets into Israel. The military prosecutor appealed Banjek's acquittal, arguing that the judges did not give enough weight to the evidence against him. In issuing the remand order, the court suspended a deportation order against Banjek pending the outcome of the April 21 appeal. Banjek had testified he was kidnapped in August 1996 by South Lebanese Army soldiers and Israeli security agents and underwent torture, even though he supports peace. *Tim*

'All options open' in pipeline probe

By LIAT COLLINS

Police investigating the sabotage of the Mekorot pipeline in the Negev on Tuesday say all options are being considered and that nationalistic motives have not been ruled out.

The sabotage left thousands of residents, farmers, tourists, and soldiers in the desert without running water for some 15 hours in the middle of a heat wave, while 15,000 cubic meters of water went to waste.

Agriculture Ministry Director-General Dan Kritchman estimated that the damage cost between \$3 million and \$5m. Though some of the damage in vegetable and grain fields and fruit orchards was a result of the heat wave, he said, the deaths of thousands of chickens and other livestock was due solely to the sabotage.

"A plan must be prepared for emergency situations in which the water supply system is damaged in order to prevent damages such as those which farmers in the Negev

incurred yesterday as a result of the sabotage of the main pipeline of Mekorot," he said.

Mekorot water company director Doron Grupper said yesterday there are between 15 and 20 acts of sabotage a month on Mekorot property in the South. He stopped short of accusing any particular group and just noted this was unparalleled elsewhere in the country.

Ramat Hanegov Local Council head Shmuel Riffman was criticized yesterday by civil rights

groups and Arab MKs for placing the blame on Beduin extremists. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel accused Riffman of repeatedly discriminating against Beduin. ACRI said Riffman should let the police solve the crime and that he should concentrate on fulfilling his role as local council head by serving all of the residents of Ramat Hanegov, whatever their background.

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani, who toured the South yesterday, said the incident

was "most serious but there is a need to act with restraint before accusing somebody."

Southern District police spokesman Dep.-Cmdr. Shalom Ben-Hamo said the police still are gathering evidence.

"The official police stand is that we have not yet determined the background to the incident. But we can definitely say that this... is the most serious incident of this type we have had to deal with," Ben-Hamo said.

Tim contributed to this report.

Bid to let Amigur residents buy apartments

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Former Ashdod mayor Aryeh Azulai, a member of the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Executive, has launched a bid to convince the agency to allow residents of some 30,000 Amigur apartments owned by the agency to buy their homes at reasonable rates.

In a letter sent to Jewish Agency chairman Avraham Burg before Pessah, Azulai asked that in the nation's jubilee year, the residents - many of them immigrants who came here in the 1950s and 1960s - be allowed to buy the apartments, which he said were originally purchased with money contributed by world Jewry.

Azulai asks that the apartments be made available to the residents at a reasonable price and with an offer of affordable mortgages, perhaps even deducting rent paid by the residents over the years.

"It is only fitting that the Jewish Agency complete the absorption of the immigrants from the early days of the state and finally put these apartments at the disposal of the residents and their families. The Jewish Agency can serve as an example for the government, which is delaying acting regarding residents of Amidar apartments it owns," he wrote.

Amigur apartments are located in Ofakim, Netivot, Sderot, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Migdal Ha'emek, and the Haifa bay-side suburbs.

Some of the residents were able to purchase their apartments in a previous offer by Amigur, but the poorer residents were unable to do so and are not allowed to pass on the rights to rent such apartments to their children who grew up in them, Azulai said.



America celebrates Israel's 50th

Michael Douglas sits with members of the Stephen S. Wise Elementary School Choir yesterday during the airing of 'To Life! America Celebrates Israel's 50th,' Hollywood's anniversary tribute to the Jewish state. It came close to resurrecting the old MGM motto, 'more stars than there are in heaven.' A cast of 21 headliners, backed by hundreds of dancers, singers, and musicians, put on a program that deftly mixed a variety show with historical reminiscences, and American comedy with Israeli songs and dances. Douglas, Kevin Costner, and Miki Avital cohosted the program. *(Text: Tom Tugend; photos: Reuters)*

Conversion board to meet in two weeks

By HAIM SHAPIRO

The first meeting of the board of the joint conversion institute is to take place on April 28. The government failed in its attempt to convene the body on Sunday, a day before the High Court of Justice is due to receive the government's reply as to why two infants, converted by the Conservative movement at Kibbutz Hamat in 1995, should not be registered as Jews.

Rabbi Reuven Hammer, the Conservative movement's member on the institute board, described the setting up of the board as a wonderful joint effort by the government, which had sponsored few such joint effort. But, he added, this did not mean that the recommendations of the Neeman Committee were being implemented.

"Until the Chief Rabbinate changes its stance, the recommendations discussed by the Neeman Committee cannot be met and we are not fulfilling our part either. We have notified the people involved that this does not commit us to stop our lawsuits or to stop our conversions," Hammer said.

Rabbi Uri Regav, director of the Reform movement's Israel Religious Action Center, said yesterday that on Sunday the IRAC is to present its summation to the Jerusalem District Court concerning 19 cases of converts who wish to be registered as Jews. The cases, which were unified by a ruling of the Supreme Court, include both individuals who were converted to Judaism by non-Orthodox rabbis in Israel and those who studied in Israel, but were formally converted abroad.

All those involved previously had been registered as non-Jews, he said, explaining that the district court deals with changes of registration.

On the eighth anniversary
of the tragic death of our beloved
Capt. ILAN KAUFMAN

who fell in the line of duty,
a memorial service will be held on Friday, April 24,
at 12 noon, at the Savoyon Cemetery.

The Family and Friends

With great sorrow we announce the death of

IRVING KATZ

The funeral took place on Tuesday, April 14.

Shiva from Motza'el Shabbat, April 18,
through Wednesday, April 22,
at the home of Allan Katz, 8 Rehov Ron, Hadera.

The Bereaved Family

With great sorrow, we announce the passing of

NORMAN SHULEWITZ

in Omaha, Nebraska.

Mourning by his Wife: Anne
Sons: Martin and Alan
Brother: Yehuda
Sisters: Diane and Bella

Shiva from Sunday, April 19 at 26a Neyot, Jerusalem.
Shaharit at 6:30 a.m.; Mincha at 7:00 p.m.

Two babies overdose on paracetamol

By JUDY SEGAL

Two babies were given overdoses of paracetamol by their parents over the past two days. One child, a two-year-old boy, recovered, while the other, an 18-month-old girl, is in serious condition and may need a liver transplant.

Dr. Tommy Schonfeld, head of the intensive care unit at Schneider Children's Medical Center for Israel, noted yesterday that the pain-relieving and fever-reducing drug is an over-the-counter medication marketed in several brands of tasty syrup or suppositories.

The girl victim, who had persistent high fever due to a virus, was given two rectal suppositories of 250 milligrams each within four hours, when the proper dose was one 150-mg. dose. She was brought to the hospital in a state of lethargy after the 24-hour period when an antidote can counter the effect. Schonfeld said the boy, who had a bacterial infection, was given a large dose as well, but he received treatment in time and recovered.

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The Maltese companies will be in Israel between the 26th and 27th April, 1998 and will be looking to meet Israeli companies interested in: Joint Ventures, Franchising Arrangements, Co-Production and/or Sub-Contracting, Transfers of Technology, Reciprocal Marketing Arrangements, and various other strategic alliances and partnerships.

Interested Israeli companies are cordially invited to meet the representatives of the Maltese companies. Private one-to-one meetings can be arranged by contacting Ms. Iris Gamaro in Tel Aviv on Tel: (03) 6473350 / (051) 246938 or Fax: (03) 6295189. The meetings will be held at the Dan Panorama Hotel, Tel Aviv.

For more information please contact:

Ms. Iris Gamaro

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This event is organized by the Malta External Trade Corporation (METCO), in conjunction with the Euro Info Correspondence Centre (EICC), and with the support of the Israel Export Institute, the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association of Israel and Bank of Valetta (Malta).

ברוך דין האמת
In deep sorrow, we announce the death of a very dear, gracious and
righteous lady

BERTHA PLUZNICK

Daughter of Reb Mordechai Halpern ז"ל

The funeral will take place today, Thursday, April 16, 1998

(20 Nissan 5758) at 11 a.m., at Kiryat Shaul Cemetery, Tel Aviv.

Shiva at the Jacobson residence, 3 Rehov Alumim, Afeka, Tel Aviv.

Mourners:

Husband: Israel (Isi) Pluznik

Daughter: Adele Genachowski and Family, New York

Daughter: Evelyn Jacobson and Family
and all the family

Supporting acts

The rumble and the shouting dies: the captains and the kings depart. The analysts and columnists and diplomats remain.

They pick through the crumbs and try to tell their masters - CEOs, readers, foreign ministers - what just happened and what it means.

The story of the week was the Mitchell peace accord for Ireland. Haven't we been here before? Camp David accords, Oslo accords, Dayton accords - assuredly a cord enough to hang oneself, and agreement enough to bring the most disagreeable people onto the streets.

Before getting too world-weary, it is worth noting that Camp David and Dayton are actually working, and the announcement of Oslo's death continues to be highly exaggerated. The Irish agreement is a new-born babe, but it looks like a healthy one.

Rev. Ian Paisley, the loud-mouth, foulmouth of Northern Ireland politics on the extreme Unionist fringe, may not be paraded before a coffin of Tony Blair or a picture of Gerry Adams in Nazi uniform, but he kept us entertained during the Friday night vigil as Mitchell's midnight deadline moved into the small hours.

Paisley pattern
At an impromptu news conference outside the Stormont conference he was boycotting, Paisley amused bored journalists in need of action with a fine performance of the Bible-thumping oratory that makes him a pleasure

to listen to - so long as one cannot hear the words of hatred, bigotry, racism and intolerance that the fine Ulster cadences cover.

While proclaiming that there would be no traitorous sellout to the Sinn Féin terrorists, he contradicted his thesis by condemning as treason the accords he

said would never exist and vowed to see them smashed.

Every good play needs its stars, but would never work without supporting cast. They are the noises off, "rhubarb-rhubarb," "traitor," the comic relief, the wailing wiles and moaning minnies that will Shakespeare used so brilliantly to hold the mirror

up to nature. That does not disguise the fact that they sometimes can be murderous, or that their impassioned hyperactivity cannot overthrow the quiet prastination of the well-intentioned.

Ian Paisley is the Cassandra wailing outside Ireland's window of opportunity. It is worth recalling with a shudder that Cassandra was condemned always to be right, but never to be believed.

Hushed paint
Northern Ireland has often rivalled Bosnia or Somalia as the subject of the most worthy but most boring story of the day. In the early days of the Stormont talks that led to the peace agreement last weekend, a journalist told a negotiator it was like watching paint dry.

See ACTS, Page 22

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

Yeltsin threatens early election

Showdown between president and parliament due tomorrow

By MARTIN NESIRKY

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's opposition-dominated lower house of parliament struck a defiant pose yesterday in its stand-off with President Boris Yeltsin over who should be the country's next prime minister.

The showdown between Yeltsin and parliament is to be decided, one way or another, in a vote tomorrow, which follows last Friday's rejection by the lawmakers of Yeltsin's candidate, Sergei Kiriyenko.

A Kremlin adviser issued an indirect warning to the State Duma, giving possible dates for a new parliamentary election if the president disbands the chamber for failing to back Kiriyenko.

Duma deputies earlier voted almost unanimously to ask the Constitutional Court to rule whether the president has the right to put forward the same prime ministerial candidate three times.

They also agreed to consider an open rather than secret vote on Kiriyenko during tomorrow's second ballot, a pro-

cedure which would make it harder for opposition deputies to break with an anti-Kiriyenko party line.

Despite the political pressures, Russian shares rose on a flurry of speculative buying.

"The market is focusing on expectations, not events," said one trader at a Western firm. "People now expect Kiriyenko to get through, so they're buying." In London, palladium prices fell from 18-year highs on news from Russia's State Precious Metals Reserve, Gokhran, that Kiriyenko had signed an order setting out export quotas of all platinum group metals. Russia dominates this world market.

As the markets moved, the Duma dug in its heels. Many in the Duma consider Kiriyenko, a 35-year-old former banker and energy minister, inexperienced and want the president to come up with a different nominee. Yeltsin sacked the last government in March.

The 67-year-old Kremlin chief has steadfastly stuck to his man, arguing he has the constitution on his side and no one else in mind for the job of injecting fresh impetus into reforms.

One judge, Vladimir Strekozov, told Reuters it would take the Constitutional Court at least two months to consider a Duma appeal on Yeltsin's right. A Kremlin adviser said court deliberations would not hold up Duma voting.

Friday's hearing is expected to follow much the same format as the first - an address by Kiriyenko, questions and answers, speeches by party leaders, and a summing up by the nominee.

But the Duma yesterday added a twist by agreeing to consider an open ballot. Last week's vote was closer than expected, when many deputies used the secrecy of an anonymous electronic vote to dodge party discipline.

"If the leaders want to stick to their tough position, they will try to push through an open vote," deputy Duma speaker Alexander Shokhin told reporters. "If they decide it is necessary to let Kiriyenko through, then the question of an open vote will be put and rejected."

Under the constitution, Yeltsin must automatically disband the Duma if it rejects his candidate or candidates three times.

Havel said in 'excellent' condition

By ROLF SODERLIND

INNSBRUCK, Austria (Reuters) - Czech President Vaclav Havel was in "surprisingly good condition" yesterday after emergency surgery in Austria to remove part of his intestine, but his surgeon warned that complications could still arise.

Innsbruck University Hospital's chief surgeon, Prof. Ernst Bodner, disclosed that he had removed a length of Havel's intestine around 30-centimeters long during a three and a half hour operation on Tuesday.

"The organs are functioning perfectly, but the illness is of such a nature that serious complications are possible within days," Bodner told reporters. "I had to remove about 30 cm. of his gut, his large intestine." However, Prof. Norbert Mutz, head of the hospi-

tal's intensive care unit, was much more upbeat about the prognosis for the former anti-communist dissident, who was taken ill while on holiday in Austria with his second wife Dagmar.

"I spoke to the president for 45 minutes this morning. His condition is excellent now," Mutz said. "He feels fine. He is already reading. He is in surprisingly good condition."

Dagmar Havel said she had given the president paracetamol to try to bring down his temperature after he fell ill on Sunday.

He complained of stomach pains which gradually worsened. She feared he might have appendicitis and summoned medical help.

"It was a well-deserved holiday, and we had looked forward to it. But fate decreed otherwise," she said.

Havel married Dagmar Veskmova, an actress, in January 1997, less than a year after the death from cancer of Olga, his wife of 32 years.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin sent a get-well message to Havel yesterday. It said: "I am glad that the operation was successful. I want to give you my sincere moral support and wish you a quick recovery and return to active state work."

The Czech president also received messages from U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima. He spoke by telephone to Austrian President Thomas Klestil as well as Czech politicians.

Havel has struggled to recover from a lung cancer operation in December 1996. He nearly died of pneumonia and other complications after the 1996 surgery.

Botha goes on trial

By JULIETTE SAUNDERS

GEORGE, South Africa (Reuters) - A defiant former president P.W. Botha went on trial yesterday for refusing to appear before South Africa's truth commission investigating abuses during the apartheid era.

Botha, 82, known and feared as the "Great Crocodile" during his years in power, told reporters before entering the court: "Even if they destroy me, they cannot destroy my soul and my convictions."

Following the failure of talks to spare him the embarrassing court appearance, he said he would remain defiant and was determined to see the case through, despite having to bear most of the legal costs.

Botha was in court for ignoring a subpoena to appear before the

statutory Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), investigating human rights abuses committed by all sides during apartheid.

The case against Botha started after his lawyers and TRC officials failed to agree on terms by which he could have testified to the commission in a closed session.

Initial testimony was from TRC executive secretary Paul van Zyl concerning legal details on the issuing of the subpoena against Botha.

TRC chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu told reporters before the case began that Botha had wanted to give evidence in a one-on-one session with him.

"I have spoken to him. He is adamant and he is ready to speak only to me. Fundamentally for Mr. Botha, it stuck in his gullet to appear before the commission at all," Tutu said.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S JUBILEE BUSINESS SUMMIT

FOREIGN INVESTOR JUBILEE AWARD

An international economic conference - the Prime Minister's Business Summit - will be held in Jerusalem from Tuesday evening, October 13 to Thursday October 15, 1998. Participants will include leaders of the international business community, Israeli and foreign ministers, officials and leading figures in the Israeli economy.

The "Foreign Investor Jubilee Award" will be presented at the conference to fifty international investors who have demonstrated their confidence in the State and its economy and whose investments have helped to advance the business sector, strengthen the economy and contribute towards Israel's economic independence.

The list of investors will contain names submitted to the public committee and representatives of the Prime Minister's Office.

The award will be presented to each recipient personally at a special festive ceremony. The Prime Minister will forward invitations to them through the Israeli ambassadors.

If you have information on foreign investors who have invested directly in the Israeli business sector in excess of fifty million dollars (at present value), or the value of their investment today exceeds 100 million dollars or who have made a special contribution towards the advancement of Israel's economy, please inform us by April 30, 1998.

We would like to thank all those who help us to ensure that anyone deserving the State's special appreciation in its Jubilee year is not overlooked.

Address for transmission of information: Jubilee Conference Headquarters, Room 1019, Industry House, 29 Rehov Hamar, Tel Aviv, POB 50481 Fax 03-562-7407, or telephone 03-562-2771

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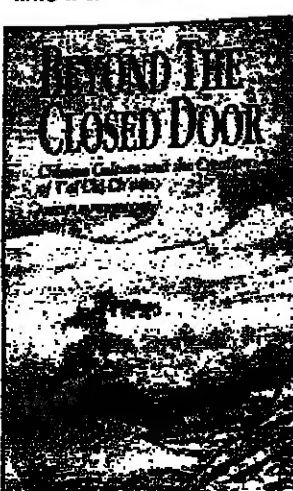
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Belfast and Oslo

British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrives here Sunday basking in the glory of the just-signed agreement over Northern Ireland – and bearing the burden of his foreign secretary's recent botched trip to the region. Unlike Robin Cook's visit, Blair's first trip to Israel as prime minister, in honor of our jubilee year, should be a friendly one, as befits both the occasion and Blair's own personal style.

Tony Blair, like his political soul mate Bill Clinton, is a model of the successful politician in the current post-ideological era. It is somehow fitting that he would preside over an agreement to end the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland, because it is, or was, the most ideological of conflicts.

Commentators have noticed that what made an agreement possible is that the demons of both sides had lost their force: Ireland is no longer an economically backward country dominated by a rigid form of Roman Catholicism, and Britain is no longer a colonial power seeking to tuck one more territory under its belt.

Even though the situation was ripe for agreement, it was not easy to achieve.

With a Good Friday deadline staring them in the face, American mediator George Mitchell told *The Washington Post* that the parties were still haggling over the sixth paragraph of the oath of office for members of the new Northern Ireland assembly. Mitchell explained the passions over each detail by saying, "There has been so much hatred here for so long that people start out with a presumption that the other guy is acting in bad faith. There's no trust, so they want every detail set down in black and white on the page." This description sounds awfully familiar. In fact, the Northern Ireland agreement is reminiscent of the Oslo Accords, in that it is built upon the concept of mutual recognition between parties that for years spoke only through the barrel of a gun. Another similarity is that both agreements created a complicated framework designed to lead to a full peace, knowing that a lasting peace between peoples cannot be created overnight.

The major difference between the agreements is that Oslo was explicitly an "interim" agreement for fixed time period – five years – while the parties in Northern Ireland skipped straight to what Israelis and Palestinians call "final status." There are those who argue that the Rabin government made a mistake in not adopting the approach taken in Ireland, and going straight to

a final-status agreement. Given the Oslo Accords' failure to build trust and confidence between the parties as had been hoped, these critics may have been right.

In this respect, even strong proponents of Oslo admit that, as an agreement, it represented the possible rather than the desirable. The "Troubles," as the Northern Ireland conflict has been called, is a conflict between two groups that share the Christian faith, and does not threaten the survival of either Ireland or Britain. It is a conflict over ethnicity and sovereignty, while the Arab-Israeli conflict shares these two components and adds a third: existence.

It is the existential quality of the Arab-Israeli conflict that has made it so intractable. Conflicts between nations are generally over borders, but Israel has since its inception been surrounded by nations do not accept its existence inside any borders. Though the Palestinians alone do not represent a serious security threat to Israel, any agreement on final borders must take into account the possibility of a Palestinian alliance with radical dictatorships, as recently indicated by the vociferous Palestinian support for Saddam Hussein. The Palestinians, of course, also see the conflict in existential terms, in that their aim is to create a new state in the region. Reconciling these conflicting interests, passions, and cultures is not an easy task, as Blair should appreciate more than most leaders.

Despite the differences between the conflicts, this region does have what to learn from the dogged, patient approach that seems to have worked for Northern Ireland. As a participant in the Irish conflict and an observer in the Middle East, Blair should be sensitive to both the uses and limitations of outside intervention. Pressure from outside can cut both ways: it can propel the parties toward agreement or it can make them less willing or able to work things out directly. The Cook mission, with its provocative visit to Har Homa, was precisely the example of how not to contribute in an effective way. If Blair wants to be more effective, he should encourage the Palestinians to systematically combat terrorism and fulfill their other commitments under Oslo, with the expectation that Israel will fulfill its commitments as well. Keeping balanced, moderate pressure on both sides may not be too exciting or make many headlines, but as the Northern Ireland agreement showed, it can make history in the long run.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INCOMPLETE ANSWER

Sir, – Only half the record was set straight by the Jewish Agency's spokesman's letter, "Mevaseret center," (April 14). What he fails to mention is the charge that giving the land and buildings in Mevaseret to the Jewish Agency's employee pension fund is immorally and unlawfully stealing millions of shekels.

What right do the pension fund members have to enrich themselves with land donated by the state and buildings built with UJA money?

This is chutzpah writ large and deserving of official scrutiny.

DOV BURT LEVY

Mevaseret Zion.

HYPOCRITICAL LEADERS

Sir, – Too bad that the hypocritical Israeli leaders who expressed condolences to Yasser Arafat after the *Tarkumiya* shooting, are not as honest as those Palestinians who openly praise terrorists and consider them heroes.

Daoud Kuttub tries to make us believe that everything will be fine, as soon as Israel withdraws and fulfills all "obligations." Let me remind him that the most atrocious terror attacks occurred at the height of peace process, when Yitzhak Rabin was prime minister.

EVA ITZKOWITZ

Ramat Gan.

GSS TORTURE

In his article "Netanyahu, Weizman and the Super Bowl," (April 9), Avinoam Bar-Yosef states that the Landau Commission guidelines – the 1987 recommendations which form the basis of GSS interrogations today – "permit almost no physical force to be exerted during an interrogation."

Bar-Yosef's apologetic that Israel uses "almost no physical force" is absurd. According both to domestic Israeli law and international conventions Israel has signed, state agents are absolutely forbidden from using any force in interrogations.

Furthermore, it is clear that under the Landau guidelines – which recommend the use of "a moderate measure of physical pressure" – hundreds of people every year are systematically tortured.

Extensive documentation by Israeli, Palestinian and international human rights organizations show that the GSS systematically

employs a series of interrogation methods against Palestinians which include prolonged sleep deprivation, hooding, exposure to loud noise and temperature extremes, binding in painful positions and forceful shaking.

Recently the State Comptroller issued a report confirming these allegations. In May 1997, the UN Committee Against Torture determined that Israel's interrogation methods constitute torture. B'Tselem estimates that each year some 850 Palestinians are subjected to these methods. Most are not charged with violent crimes following the interrogation.

Euphemisms such as "moderate pressure" are not helpful. Only by confronting the truth can we foster a productive debate about what kind of society we want to be.

JESSICA MONTELL

B'Tselem.

Jerusalem.

ARBEL'S POLITICS

appointment will be reinforced.

So will my feeling that right-wing governments are afraid to treat the left-wing opposition like the Left treat the Right when it is in power – the only way of attaining real democratic freedom in this country.

YOHANAN RAMATI

Jerusalem.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On April 16, 1933, *The Palestine Post* reported in a lengthy article that the eight years old Zionist Revisionist party was threatened by a split due to differences of opinion between its founder, Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky and the movement's executive.

50 years ago: On April 16,

1948, *The Palestine Post* reported that the Hagana routed a gang of Arabs who tried to occupy the camp at Tel Livinsky after it was abandoned by the Royal Air Force. Twenty-one Arabs were killed in the three-hour battle, while the Hagana suffered no casualties. Another serious bomb attempt was foiled in Haifa.

25 years ago: On April 16, 1973, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that security forces made large scale arrests in Gaza and Nablus – some 40 people suspected of being members of Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine were arrested.

Alexander Zvielli

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NOT FOR ALL DEBTS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE



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Ellis Island

the United States

ONE



Misplaced support for Vanunu

GERALD M. STEINBERG

A few weeks after British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook came to tell us how to negotiate with the Palestinians, a number of politicians from his Labor Party are planning to demonstrate on behalf of Mordchai Vanunu. His actions, first renouncing his religion, then selling some secrets regarding the Israeli nuclear program to a newspaper, and most recently, renouncing his parents, reflect deep psychological problems.

The majority of Israelis, across the political spectrum, view the former technician at the Dimona nuclear complex as Israel's most notorious traitor, one whose actions might have endangered national security and even survival.

In contrast, the unreformed members of the British Labor Party passionately believe that Israel's ambiguous nuclear policy is a mistake, and support revealing all of Israel's nuclear secrets. They have even nominated Vanunu for the Nobel Peace Prize. However, they are ignorant of the most basic issues, and too arrogant and self-righteous to listen to differing views or to learn about the logic behind the Israeli policy.

Beyond the paternalistic remnants of colonialism, these actions reflect a universal goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. In the 1920s, the British Left led the pacifist movement, opposing military budgets and military preparedness. This was a noble goal, which left England unprepared to stop or even deter Hitler and the German army.

Today's idealists and the descendants of the pacifists focus on the effort to create a nuclear

free world. They adopted the confused Vanunu when he claimed to be joining in their crusade, revealed the "secrets of Dimona," and was lured back to Israel and jailed for espionage.

The absence of any significant support in Israel for Vanunu's antics reflects the very real security dilemmas which most of us have faced for 50 years. Israel remains a

decided to "reformulate" this policy by selling his information and some illicit pictures taken in the Dimona plant to the *Sunday Times* of London. Nobody elected him, nor did he attempt to convince either the Israeli public or its decision makers of his views. There is an ongoing public discussion regarding policy in this critical area, but neither Vanunu nor his

If their goal is to change Israel's nuclear deterrent policy, Vanunu's supporters would be well advised to focus their efforts on removing the threats that have led to it

reluctant nuclear power, and has never tested or openly declared possession of a nuclear weapon. The nuclear deterrent remains an ambiguous capability and the "weapon last resort" to prevent attacks that threaten national survival or thousands of casualties.

With a very small territory, no strategic depth in which to absorb a major attack, and outnumbered by at least three to one in conventional weapons and ground forces, Israel has relied on the threat of massive deterrence to neutralize existential threats. This policy seems to have been successful, most recently in 1991, when Saddam Hussein did not risk using biological or chemical warheads in the Scud missiles he launched against Israel.

HOWEVER, Vanunu unilaterally

supporters abroad have ever attempted to participate.

Instead, the emotionally frustrated Vanunu simply left Israel (unhindered, despite his classified work), went to Australia, became a Christian, and found a buyer for his secrets. He may not have convinced anyone of the wisdom of his views, but he did get the attention he craves.

None of this is enough to justify nominating Vanunu for a Nobel Peace Prize or demonstrating on his behalf. In fact, these demonstrations are further evidence that for these "idealists," Jewish survival and Israeli security can be readily sacrificed for the "greater good."

Like Vanunu himself, his foreign supporters seem to be incapable of analyzing the basis for Israel's deterrence policy and the

alternatives. Serious efforts to examine the options conclude that under current conditions, the current policy of nuclear ambiguity is the optimum approach. It provides for credible deterrence and supports the peace process by removing the Arab military option, without preventing an eventual Middle East nuclear weapons free zone – if all the external threats are removed.

If their goal is to change Israeli policy, Vanunu's supporters would be well advised to focus their efforts on removing the threats to Israel. They could go to Iraq and help UNSCOM locate Saddam Hussein's remaining chemical and biological weapons, or to Teheran to lead mass demonstrations against the Iranian nuclear efforts. They might also consider placing notices in Syrian newspapers calling on President Hafez Assad to give up his chemical weapons and missiles directed against Israel.

In Cairo, they might try to organize intellectuals to protest the diversion of billions of dollars from vital economic development every year for the purchase of new tanks, combat aircraft, and a variety of missiles. Perhaps these well-meaning pacifists will ask President Hosni Mubarak why Egypt, with its huge territory and lack of enemies, has been so eager to strip Israel of its nuclear deterrent, while refusing to consider limitations on its massive conventional army.

Once they have succeeded in these missions, there will be no reason for Israel to maintain its deterrent, and no more obstacles to a nuclear-free Middle East.

The historic lesson of Pessah

URI REGEV

essence which is too often overlooked. Already, during the special Shabbat immediately before Pessah, *Shabbat HaGadol*, we see that while the prophet Malachi foretells God's punishment for those who fail to pay the tithes and

may be your God and you may be My people... For I the Lord act with mercy, justice and equity in the world; For in these I delight."

Thus the rabbis of old, who chose the *haftarah*, made sure to counter any inordinate emphasis

We should be mindful of our responsibility to promote freedom from bondage and freedom from want

offerings to the priests and Levites, he makes it clear that the greatest sins are those of people who "commit adultery, swear falsely, who cheat laborers of their hire and who subvert (the cause of) the widow, orphan and stranger."

While the Torah portion concentrates on Temple ritual sacrifices, not only Malachi but Jeremiah as well (in the *haftarah* for *Tzav* when it does not directly precede Pessah) makes it plain that our major concern must be personal and social justice:

"When I freed your fathers from the land of Egypt, I did not speak with them or command them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifice. But this is what I commanded them: Do My bidding, that I

on ritual by clearly selecting prophetic texts which featured ethical action as God's will. Moving along to the Seder itself, probably the most important sentence is: "In every generation all individuals should regard themselves as if they personally had come out of Egypt."

Clearly, the Seder comes to tell us that the songs and rituals, far from being ends in themselves, are teaching aids directing us to place ourselves in the shoes of our ancestors, to sense their pain and desperation as an oppressed minority and to rejoice and celebrate their freedom.

HOW should we appropriately celebrate their, and our freedom?

The answer continues in the Torah portions of *Hol Hamoad* which intersperses with its ritual instruction, specific injunctions rooted in overarching principles such as providing sustenance for the poor and indigent – Jew and non-Jew alike; treating the debtor mercifully so as not to impoverish him; shunning bribery so as not to corrupt the legal system and recognizing the special responsibility of the Jew not to oppress the stranger since we should know the feelings of the stranger having ourselves been "strangers in the land of Egypt."

Thus the Torah commands us to apply one law for all in the country. Since Pessah is timeless, it would be fitting for Israel, aspiring to be a Jewish state and for an Israeli society consisting of present day *yotzei Mitzraim*, to take this lesson to heart.

This way we will bring the historic lesson of Pessah to bear on our conduct toward our fellow human beings, Jew and non-Jew alike, and make us mindful of our responsibility to promote freedom from bondage and freedom from want to the best of our personal and communal ability.

The writer is director of the Israel Religious Action Center of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism.

POSTSCRIPT

IF YOU think US television newsmagazines could not stop talking about Princess Diana in 1997, you were right.

Diana was the subject of a staggering 696 stories on syndicated and network shows, an industry newsletter reported.

Extra alone aired 106 segments after her death, an average of more than two a day during September, according to *Video Information Show Report*.

"The Diana story is going to

have life way beyond the interest in her death," said Russ Peace, publisher of the report. "Coverage of Diana is going to become bigger than Elvis, bigger than Marilyn Monroe."

There were also 80 different stories on the paparazzi involvement in Diana's life and death, 60 stories on entertainment tributes to Diana and 45 segments on how her princes will cope.

Some newsmagazines found anything about Diana worth

reporting.

Hard Copy reported on a psychic trying to bring Diana back from the dead. *Access Hollywood* told how her death would affect British fashion designers. CNN's *Showbiz Today* reported on Diana Halloween costumes; and *Extra* analyzed her death's impact on hair design.

Second in the affection of newsmagazines last year was JonBenet Ramsey, whose unsolved murder was the subject of 358 stories.

Ellen DeGeneres, star of the ABC sitcom *Ellen* who revealed her homosexuality both on screen and off, was third with 283 segments.

President Clinton was sixth on the list.

"Not to sound cynical, but I was very surprised to see the president rated so highly," Peace said.

Then again, most Clinton stories came during November, when there were hearings on Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit.

مكتبة القدس

Belfast is certainly no Oslo

There is no similarity between the Oslo Agreement, signed in 1993 between Israel and the Palestinians, and the Belfast Agreement reached in 1998 between the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

Equally, there is no resemblance between the bridging proposal that the Americans suggested to us just before the establishment of the state, proposing a cease-fire that would have delayed the proclamation of the Jewish state, and the American bridging proposal which might accelerate the formation of a Palestinian state.

(The only thing these two proposals have in common is the name of the official in charge of mediation: Ross. Fifty years ago it was John Ross, today Dennis Ross.)

It's true that President Clinton,

The Belfast Agreement can't serve as a model for a solution to the conflict between us and the Palestinians

King Hussein and other statesmen have proposed exploiting the momentum of the American success in Ireland as a lever for American mediation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But the Belfast Agreement, apart from radiating optimism and increasing confidence in America's diplomatic ability, can't serve as a model for a solution to the conflict between us and the Palestinians.

This is not only because of the different nature of the conflicts, but chiefly because there were no unwanted mediators interfering with America's endeavors during the Irish negotiations. The European Union wasn't trying to gain mediator status as it is in the Middle East - even though the Irish conflict is set in Europe, and concerns two EU member states.

This isn't the only difference between the two conflicts: in London there were no demonstrations against the government when it shelved talks with Sinn Féin. The British government said the talks would only resume when Irish extremists ended their terrorist activities in London and Londonderry and this reflected the British national consensus of no negotiations under terrorist pressure. This steadfast stance helped the British reach an agreement guaranteeing the integrity of the United Kingdom, including Ulster (Northern Ireland).

The negotiations towards the settlement of the conflict in Northern Ireland were held quietly, with no thunder and lightning from the UN General Assembly or Security Council. UN discussions generally foster illusions for one or other party in the conflict, as if a UN resolution in its favor absolves it from seeking compromise. UN discussions are also liable to encourage one side in the mistaken belief that it no longer needs either direct negotiations or mediation to

achieve its ends. Indeed, the many discussions in the UN on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have actually served to increase the duration of the conflict.

WE welcome the settlement of any conflict which is likely to prevent or reduce bloodshed in the world. The Belfast Agreement deserves praise, even credit in that it might be the beginning of the end of the long-lasting blood-rid-

MOSHE ZAK

Palestinian conflict, we can say that the Belfast agreement consists of a "functional compromise" rather than a "territorial compromise." In other words, Britain retains total sovereignty over all Ulster, but has created a shaky connection with Eire in order to achieve peace between the two parties in Ulster.

The British, who have been preaching to us that Israel shouldn't take a pedantic stand on the removal of clauses from the Palestinian covenant, will certainly rigidly insist that the Dublin parliament makes an unambiguous decision to fulfill its commitment.

Dennis Ross, who arrives in Jerusalem next week, can't reproduce the tactics of mediator John Mitchell. His mission is more complicated, and his working con-

ditions are harder. Ross received a difficult inheritance - the Oslo Agreement - which restricts his maneuverability.

If he had been at Oslo, perhaps Ross would have whispered to the Israeli representatives that before the framework of the permanent settlement was agreed, they shouldn't commit themselves to the dates of meaningful withdrawals from the territories beyond the initial areas of Gaza and Jericho intended for the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

Now Ross has to be involved in the interpretation of the Oslo Agreement in order to determine the extent of the required IDF withdrawal. The tangled bargaining on interpretation doesn't allow him room to maneuver and to produce creative solutions. In spite of

heart he understands that the essential disagreement is, not about the percentage of territory in Judea and Samaria from which the IDF will withdraw, but the crisis due in May 1999. This is Arafat's target date for the proclamation of a Palestinian state, whether in agreement with Israel or diametrically opposed to Israel's intentions. Extending Palestinian rule to wider territories before an Israeli-Palestinian agreement will hasten the implementation of Arafat's plans for May 1999.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, also due to make an official visit to Israel next week, has no such problems in the implementation of the Belfast Agreement. He has succeeded, also with the help of an American mediator, to reject any suggestion of British territorial compromise.

Middle Israel
AMOTZ ASA-EL

Two years later

Even the staunchly anti-revolutionary Edmund Burke conceded, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, that "a state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation."

Yet in the land of milk and honey a host of change-averse academics, politicians, and journalists are still seeking to restore the manifestly defunct system whereby anonymous, sectarian, spoils-thirsty party caucuses imposed on us inept leadership.

In reality, however, the rapidly maturing performances of both Binyamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak indicate that, two years after its launch, our remodeled premiership is beginning to deliver the kind of public alertness,

essarily to everyone's liking, but then none of it does not coincide with Netanyahu's campaign promises. If anything, though not too late, it's too little.

Similarly, Netanyahu's treatment of the peace process is more or less what his voters could have expected, i.e. recognizing the Palestinian Authority but dealing with it less warmly than Labor did. Whether or not this approach is prudent will become apparent in the remainder of the current political cycle, and in all likelihood play an important role in the next election; but the system, by the same token that it motivates the prime minister to do things, also allows him to do things his way, as indeed it was meant to.

The rapidly maturing performances of both Netanyahu and Barak indicate that directly elected leaders are better programmed to deliver the kind of public alertness, national sensitivity, and policy commitment their predecessors so frequently lacked

national sensitivity, and policy commitment which their predecessors so often lacked.

To be sure, on either side of the political divide most would agree that Netanyahu's initial performance verged on the catastrophic.

The nonchalance with which he assumed office, scathingly devoid of operational policy plans; the frivolity with which he sanctioned a scandalous appointment like Roni Bar-On; the apathy with which he subcontracted many of his most delicate duties to a thug like Avigdor Lieberman; and the ease with which he trumpeted hollow promises, from making cabinet members forfeit their Knesset seats, to selling 100 state-owned companies within 100 days, all gave ample reason to suspect that, a century after its inception, the Zionist enterprise had fallen in the lap of a charlatan.

Meanwhile, sensing the gathering alarm over his conduct, Netanyahu's many opponents repeatedly came close to unseating him, whether after his questioning by police over the Bar-On Affair, or in the heat of the Likud's contentious party convention last fall, or in the aftermath of David Levy's thunderous resignation in the winter.

Since then, however, even his many local and foreign detractors have realized that manipulating a directly-elected premier is much harder than it was with his Knesset-elected predecessors. The successive resignations of three ministers have not only failed to dent his sway but even enhanced it. In this much more stable structure, the premier's dependence on Knesset votes is not nearly what it was under the previous system.

YET much more tellingly, the prime minister has learned that under the new system he is held personally accountable for his cabinet's failure to generate change. The result is a rapid maturity process.

From searching for a way out of Lebanon and seeking faster trains to launching a convertible shekel, selling Bank Hapoalim, imposing competition on Egged, and now offering a 49 percent stake in the Electric Corporation on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, Netanyahu is clearly sweating in an effort to better our lives.

Surely, the extent to which he is successful in tackling such challenges has yet to be gauged, but the thought that in less than two years on the job he has already done more on these fronts than Yitzhak Shamir had during an aggregate seven years at this country's helm is mind-boggling.

Shamir, throughout his famously lethargic years in office, used to go home every afternoon and take a good snooze. The directly-elected premier cannot allow himself that kind of luxury - and neither can this country.

Obviously, in its content this gathering hyperactivity is not nec-

NOW Netanyahu's rapidly improving record on policy commitment has also been surprisingly matched by a hitherto take-no-stand Ehud Barak.

In adopting a clear stance favoring an end to haredi draft-dodging, the opposition leader has crossed a Rubicon in which all his predecessors wouldn't even dip their toes. Evidently, such boldness could not be expected from Knesset-elected premiers.

Apparently, directly elected leaders are better equipped to sense what makes Middle Israeli tick, rant, and rage, and they also are compelled to do something about it, knowing that the new system won't allow prime ministerial aspirants to endlessly graze our political pastures despite successive failures to win power, the way Shimon Peres and Menachem Begin did.

Yes, both Barak and Netanyahu have been doing a lot of teething, from the former's silly to-be-or-not-to-be philosophizing on what he might have done if he hadn't been himself, or the latter's resounding whisper into Rabbi Kadouri's ear, questioning the Left's attachment to Judaisim.

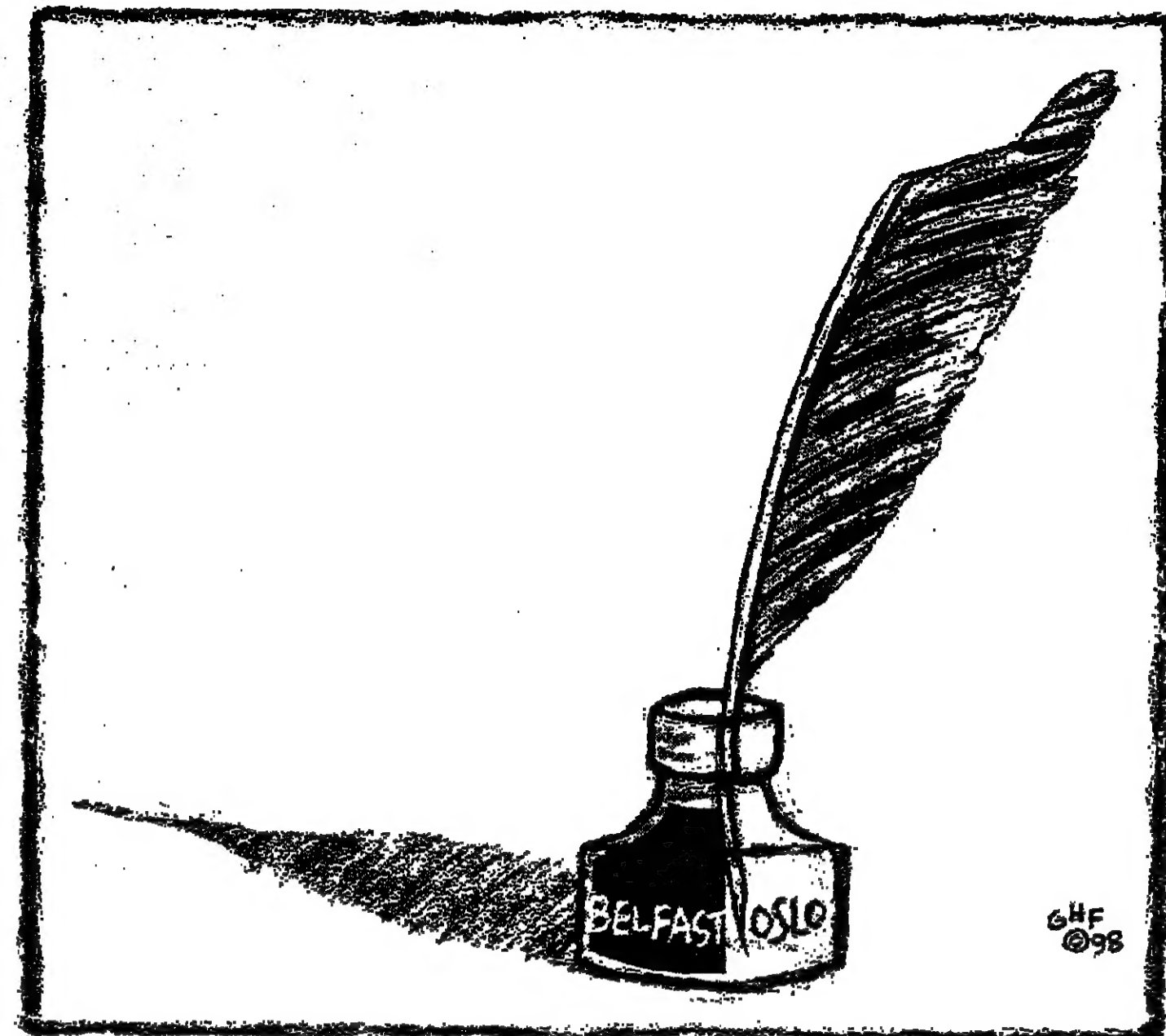
But the fear, and speed with which the two apologized for and reversed those slips of tongue means that we the people now matter much more than we did under their predecessors' reign.

Begin never apologized for having portrayed kibbutzniks as effendis "sitting by their swimming pools," because he never thought of running after their votes. Netanyahu, on the other hand, had to apologize, because the new system compels him to focus on the Middle Israeli electorate, including tens of thousands of pork-eating, Sabbath-desecrating, and even intermarried Israelis.

Barak also understood this, with his apology to Israel's non-Ashkenazim, a gesture which offered a refreshing contrast to the broadsides Yitzhak Rabin frequently hurled at constituencies to which he did not belong.

Yes, both Barak and Netanyahu have encountered, and are likely to continue deflecting, a kind of collegial backstabbing that wouldn't embarrass Brutus. But at the end of the day they should remember that the quest to dispose of the new political system mainly hides a displeasure with the directly elected leaders' inescapable accountability, and that what people like former premiers Peres and Shamir or MKs Belin and Meridor miss most is not a better system, but personal clout.

And yes, both Netanyahu and Barak have assumed their positions unfortunately shorn of political experience. But considering their ostensibly savvy predecessors' successful navigation of the Zionist Titanic into the icebergs of economic statism, Lebanese guerrilla warfare, and haredi civic robbery, maybe such fresh-thinking novices are exactly what we need.



den conflict between the two communities in Northern Ireland. But we should not deceive ourselves that it can act as a recipe for the settlement of any other conflict.

In fact, the bloody conflict in Northern Ireland stems from a previous peace agreement (1921) in which Northern Ireland, which has a Protestant majority, was incorporated into the United Kingdom (Britain).

This was the point at issue between the Catholics and the Protestants. The new peace agreement doesn't reduce the territory of British sovereignty in Ulster, and only creates a more complicated arrangement for coexistence of the two rival communities within the geographical division laid down more than 75 years ago.

If we use terms borrowed from the vocabulary of the Israel-

The agreement contains no British commitment to transfer "territories" to the Irish, neither 9% nor 13%. The agreement just defines "guidelines" for "restricted autonomy, a parliament in Belfast and local government, intended to consult also with the Dublin government on various economic and social questions. Defense and foreign affairs remain entirely in the hands of the UK government.

The Irish government's commitment to remove from its constitution the clause defining the borders of the country to include Northern Ireland is also similar to the PLO's commitment to remove from the Palestinian covenant the clauses denying Israel's right to exist. And the British will certainly want more than a promise from Sinn Féin that it has relinquished its claim to Northern Ireland.

ditions are harder. Ross received a difficult inheritance - the Oslo Agreement - which restricts his maneuverability.

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The View from the East

DAUD KUTTAB

Palestinian women move out of the shadows

Something unusual happened recently. Heated discussions have taken place among Palestinians in which Israel was not a party to the debate. No, I am not talking about the row over who killed Muhi Shafir. The mysterious death of "Engineer No. 2" actually diverted attention from the heated debate that has engulfed Palestinians during the past month.

The parties to this fierce debate were Palestinian women activists on the one hand and Islamic clerics on the other.

The trigger that blew the lid was a series of awareness programs that a coalition of Palestinian women conducted under the title "A model parliament."

Through these seminars and workshops which took place all over Palestine, women met and discussed issues of importance to them and nominated delegates for a two-day conference that took the shape of a parliament.

During the months of preparation, women were introduced to various stages that bills go through before becoming law. The Palestinian Legislative Council gave guidance and advice and lent the women its regular meeting location for some of the sessions.

While the women talked about a variety of issues, naturally the gender issue and relations between women and men were high on the list of topics in which these women thought that changes are needed in any future law. In fact, these women were suggesting possible amendments to the existing Jordanian law that deals with issues of personal status.

Changing laws dealing with issues of marriage, divorce, inheritance, child care, and so on was long considered a taboo. Armed with a variety of liberal personal

status laws from countries like Tunisia and Pakistan, the women were suggesting that a serious look should be given to amending the existing law that governs the personal status of Palestinians.

To many Muslim clerics the idea of changing these laws was as close to religious rebellion as one can get. What followed was a series of sharp attacks against the model parliament and the women's movement from the pulpit of many Palestinian mosques, including Al Aqsa. The organizers of the model parliament were attacked as threatening the Islamic name of Palestinian society and told that their efforts to replace Islamic Sharia law were unacceptable.

Although the attacks from the mosques were tough, the threats and innuendoes that followed were worse. But the women held firm and began fighting back publicly, with many in the Palestinian National Assembly and the Palestinian non-governmental organization community publicly endorsing their right to express their opinions free of threats.

THE most heated debate took place on local television stations.

Palestine TV ignored the issue and it got little coverage in the established Palestinian press. Women and Islamic clerics appeared on some programs and fought it out with callers asking questions or aligning with this or that side. The women explained that with the Sharia being the main source of Palestinian legislation, but that the existing Jordanian law left much to be desired even by Islamic standards.

If the existing law can be improved without contradicting Islamic principles, there should be no problem, they argued. Setting a minimum legal age, for example,

can provide for a better Palestinian society because it would reduce early marriages. While Islam provides for women getting an inheritance (even though it is measured as half the portion of a male), Palestinian tradition forces women to give up even that share. Why not create legislation, the women argued, that could protect women from losing the inheritance that Islam guarantees them.

The Islamic personalities who appeared with these women argued that the issue of personal status is so delicate that it should not be dealt with so lightly, especially by lay people. They totally rejected the concept that Islam should be the main source

of Palestinian legislation.

They insisted that it should be the only source of legislation. They scoffed at the women arguing that this issue should be handled only by religious experts and they rejected the idea of using the Tunisian or any other liberal Islamic model.

While the women made a valiant effort, the Islamic leaders clearly won the public battle, simply because of the fact that they have the medium of the mosque as well as their well established religious role. The women, who probably were not prepared enough, seem to have underestimated prevailing traditions and religious power.

Some have argued that the

women made a mistake by introducing such a sensitive topic without much more preparation. But for many leaders of the Palestinian women's movement, the fact that they succeeded in getting these burning issues out on the debating floor was a big victory. And for them, the attacks were just proof that they touched an important nerve in Palestinian society that has been ignored for a long time because of the predominance of the political discussion.

If anything, these courageous women have shown that there is reason for Palestinians to be hopeful for social as well as political freedom on the horizon.

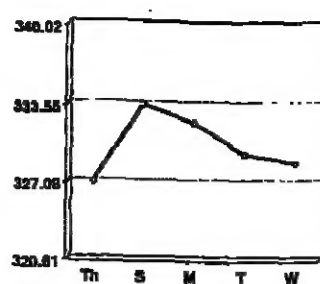
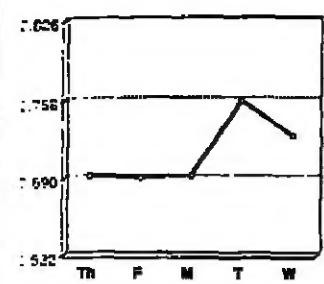
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BUSINESS

in brief

DOLLAR / SHEKEL

MAOF INDEX

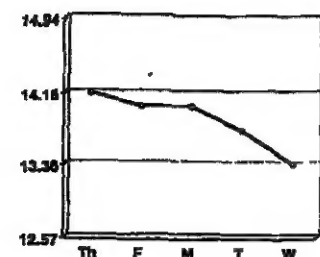
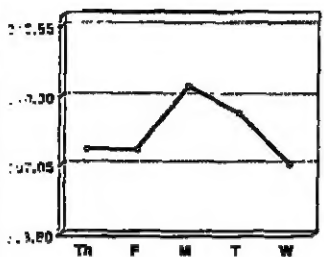


GOLD

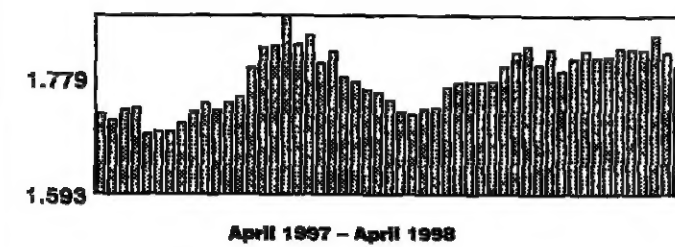
\$ per ounce

OIL

\$ per barrel of Brent crude

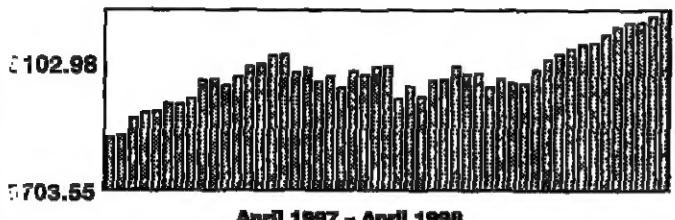


DOLLAR / DEUTSCHEMARK



April 1997 - April 1998

DOW JONES INDUST. AVG.



April 1997 - April 1998

BITS AND BYTES

By NINA GILBERT

Aerodiam enlists \$1.5m.

Aerodiam, which makes software packages for the diamond and jewelry industries, recently made a \$1.5 million private placement in the United States. Aerodiam is also preparing for its IPO in New York, according to CO Harel Kozlowski, who owns the company with US and Canadian investors.

The funds from the enlistment are to be used by the company to expand its product lines and expand its activities into other areas. This year the company also intends to double its marketing worldwide. At present the company, based in Ramat Gan, has marketing offices in the US, Belgium, India and Thailand.

Wiztec system to be used by Bell Atlantic

Wiztec Solutions' WIZARD system is to be used in a five-year contract won by the Cincinnati-based CBIS to provide billing and subscriber management for Bell Atlantic's offering of direct broadcast satellite (DBS) services. A service launch is expected by this summer in two major markets.

The Herzliya-based Wiztec produces software which provides multi-channel subscription television system operators with a comprehensive subscriber management system. The company's WIZARD program works with all phases of the satellite business, including support for conditional access and authorization of smart cards.

This is the first major agreement in which CBIS will utilize the WIZARD billing and subscriber management software. Under a co-marketing agreement, CBIS has the exclusive rights to market and operate WIZARD in North America. CBIS has purchased nearly 20 percent of Wiztec.

Comverse wins contract with cellular provider

Comverse Technology's Network Systems Division announced this week that it won a contract to supply Societe Francaise du Radiotelephone with voice mail/text messaging systems throughout its digital wireless Global System for Mobile (GSM) communications network in France.

SFR is one of the two largest cellular telephone providers in France. Installation of the system is to continue throughout this year for the network, which currently has more than two million subscribers.

Comverse's local subsidiary is the Tel Aviv-based Efrat Technology, which engages in development and manufacturing.

Check Point's FireWall-1 chosen by automakers

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd.'s FireWall-1 enterprise security suite has been chosen by the North American automobile manufacturers trade association, the Automotive Industry Action Group (AIAG), for its Automotive Network Exchange.

"Due to the competitive nature of the automotive industry, security is a crucial component for the ANX network," said Karl E. Schohl, ANX business manager. Endorsed by companies such as Chrysler, Ford and General Motors, the ANX network is potentially the world's largest Virtual Private Network (VPN), according to Check Point. The network will enable automotive suppliers to communicate globally with all trading partners.

FireWall-1 has also won the fourth consecutive Tester's Choice award from Data Communications magazine. The award is based on laboratory tests of Windows NT firewalls.

New Dimension establishes Mexico subsidiary

New Dimension Software, Ltd., the Tel Aviv-based maker of systems management software, announced the establishment this week of New Dimension Software de Mexico S.A. de C.V., a wholly-owned subsidiary based in Mexico City, with the aim of tapping into the expanding Latin American computer market. The new company will be responsible for all sales, marketing and technical support for New Dimension Software products in Mexico.

Study: 76% of firms have serious intrusions

Some 76 percent of organizations in Israel suffer from serious intrusions into their computer systems, according to a study conducted recently by Comsec, a Petah Tikva-based information security company. Another 13% of organizations have medium-level intrusions and the rest characterized the intrusions as a minor problem.

C&W, Telecom Italia form world's 2nd-largest telecom group

By KRISTIN RIDLEY

LONDON (Reuters) - Cable and Wireless Plc, Britain's second largest telecom group, laid the cornerstone of a global partnership with Telecom Italia yesterday with more than \$2 billion in asset disposals.

Heralding the formation of the world's second largest international telecom group behind US giant AT&T Corp., and serving over 1,400 multinational customers in more than 200 cities, C&W said Telecom Italia would become its "anchor partner" in continental Europe.

And while it remains unclear whether any future deal could include AT&T and its Unisource telecom alliance, with which

Telecom Italia is continuing separate cooperation talks, neither partner is ruling anything out.

"The future is in the hands of the gods," said Telecom Italia's chairman Gian Mario Rossignolo in a joint telephone interview with C&W's chief executive Richard Brown.

"There are many opportunities," added Brown, noting that before June the companies planned to announce unspecified ventures and agreements as they expand networks throughout Europe, Asia Pacific and South America.

"But I would like to stress... that this is about Telecom Italia and Cable and Wireless. We're not trying to discourage anybody else, but these two great compa-

nies have come together to plan for the future."

The companies plan to invest in a joint operating company, which will carry more than 17 billion minutes annually, to "optimize" investments in their global networks and services to multinational customers.

As part of a deal announced last Friday, C&W has agreed to sell to Telecom Italia its 20 percent stake in French mobile phone group Bouygues Telecom for \$743 million.

The stake has long been considered by analysts to be for sale. And C&W, which last November announced plans for \$1.7b. of asset sales in an attempt to streamline its global empire, is also selling to its Italian partner up to 20% of its West Indies business and 5% of its North America unit.

Although analysts welcomed the news that helps spell an end to some uncertainty about C&W's international strategy, the deal failed to pare the losses clocked up by C&W's shares over the day.

The stock closed down 3.5p, or 0.47%, at 745p and analysts blamed market disappointment that C&W — which has long been tipped as a takeover target — was now believed a less likely target for the likes of British Telecommunications Plc, Britain's premier telecom operator.

But in the meantime, some analysts expect Telecom Italia and C&W — neither of which are leaders in the global corporate communications market — to seek other partners in a race to win lucrative contracts from multinational corporations.

Seoul court places Kia in receivership

By SANGMIN HAN

SEOUL (Bloomberg) - A Seoul court has placed Korea's Kia Motors Corp. in receivership, clearing the way for the possible sale of the company at international auction and prompting a strike threat from labor unions.

Hyundai Motor Co., the biggest Korean auto manufacturer,

Daewoo Motor Co. and Samsung Motor Inc. have said they want to take over Kia Motors, and American Consulting Group is also reportedly discussing an investment.

A Seoul district court — which also placed affiliates Asia Motors Co. and Kia Intertrade Co. in receivership — handed down its decision almost seven months after

creditors applied to the court after parent Kia Group became insolvent.

The court also appointed Yoo Chong Yul, vice chairman of Hyosung Industries Co., to oversee management of Kia Motors and Asia Motors, turning down a request to name Kia Motors president Park Je Hyuck as a co-trustee. Its announcement came amid

mounting pressure on the Korean government to resolve Kia's future after more than nine months of bankruptcy protection, which ties up bank resources and allows its

companies to operate without paying their debts.

Following the court ruling, union members voted to strike to protest against any sale.

BIRD to fund feasibility studies

By NINA GILBERT

The BIRD Foundation has decided to offer for the first time grants for academics to conduct industrial feasibility studies, with life sciences research the field selected for the project, according to Dov Hersberg, executive director of the bilateral US-Israel industrial R&D fund.

The \$30,000 grants will be made available to both US and Israeli applicants, he said.

"The big problem is moving scientists to the application stage,

and investments from basic research to business research," Hersberg said.

"This is the first time funding is being offered to research on the university level," he noted.

The field of life sciences was chosen for the feasibility studies because of its potential for growth and its ability to generate high-tech products, he said.

"These applications bridge humanitarian needs with sophisticated technological tools," he said.

Bio-sensors are considered to be

especially promising, as are other diagnostic tools in the medical technology field.

The fund has an annual budget of some \$20 million. BIRD links Israeli and American companies for the development, manufacture, and sale of innovative products based on industrial R&D.

The decision to finance the feasibility studies was made at a recent Jerusalem conference.

The bio-sensor market was valued at only \$1m. in 1997, while the potential of the market is valued at some \$480m.

UN suppliers meeting scheduled here in May

By NINA GILBERT

United Nations purchases from Israeli companies are expected to increase significantly as a result of the UN procurement conference being held here next month, according to Israel Export Institute director-general Amir Hayek. This will be the first time the conference has taken place here.

A UN official in Jerusalem said the Interagency Procurement Working Group was invited to hold its 23rd annual meeting here with the aim of becoming acquainted with Israeli companies.

"There is definitely a lot of potential for the UN to boost its purchases from Israel," she said. "By holding the meeting here, the UN buyers will become familiar with the goods and services available from Israeli companies."

Some 50 buyers from the 30 UN agencies are to attend the meeting.

The UN spends some \$4.5 billion a year on goods and services to implement its programs.

According to an institute study, Israeli companies are very unfamiliar with the UN supply market and how to enter into it. As a result, the UN only buys only some \$10 million in Israeli products a year, according to Hayek. Most of these goods are sold to the UN observer units stationed in Israel.

Some 70 percent of UN purchases are made for its humanitarian activities, the leading buyer being the World Food Program. The next largest purchases are made by the UN peacekeeping units.

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7 DAYS

4 QUESTIONS

3 MATZAHs

10 PLAGUES

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OF 1998

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TASE slips on export forecast

LAST	CHANGE	LAST	CHANGE
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	
Tel Aviv	45.25	+0.0375	

SOURCE: S&P COMSTOCK (DATE 15-APR-98)

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Sal (Basket) (1)	Sal	Change
U.S. Dollar (1)	3.9800	0.0000
British Pound (1)	2.0271	0.0000
Japanese Yen (100)	2.0271	0.0000
Swiss Franc (1)	2.0271	0.0000
Canadian Dollar (1)	2.0271	0.0000
Australian Dollar (1)	2.0271	0.0000
Israeli Sheqel (1)	2.0271	0.0000

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

DJ Industrial	Change
9162.27	+20.07
DJ 30	Change
9162.27	+20.07
DJ 100	Change
9162.27	+20.07
DJ 200	Change
9162.27	+20.07
DJ 500	Change
9162.27	+20.07

OTHER MARKET INDEXES

FTSE 100	Change
2824.1	+3.30
Nikkei 225	Change
16299.3	+9.14
DAX	Change
3384.61	+10.98
Hang Seng	Change
8111.11	+11.11
ASX	Change
3384.61	+10.98
SEAX	Change
3384.61	+10.98

DOLLAR CROSSRATES (US)

Point	Spot	Change
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000
1.0000	1.0000	0.0000

US COMMODITIES

Commodity	Price	Change
Crude Oil	28.25	+0.25
Natural Gas	1.15	+0.05
Gold	380.00	+0.00
Silver	16.00	+0.00
Copper	1.50	+0.00
Aluminum	0.80	+0.00
Zinc	0.90	+0.00
Nickel	1.20	+0.00
Lead	0.70	+0.00
Iron Ore	1.00	+0.00

LONDON COMMODITIES

Commodity	Price	Change
Crude Oil	28.25	+0.25
Natural Gas	1.15	+0.05
Gold	380.00	+0.00
Silver	16.00	+0.00
Copper	1.50	+0.00
Aluminum	0.80	+0.00
Zinc	0.90	+0.00
Nickel	1.20	+0.00
Lead	0.70	+0.00
Iron Ore	1.00	+0.00

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

Commodity	Price	Change
Gold	380.00	+0.00
Silver	16.00	+0.00
Copper	1.50	+0.00
Aluminum	0.80	+0.00
Zinc	0.90	+0.00
Nickel	1.20	+0.00
Lead	0.70	+0.00
Iron Ore	1.00	+0.00

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

Commodity	Price	Change
Gold	380.00	+0.00
Silver	16.00	+0.00
Copper	1.50	+0.00
Aluminum	0.80	+0.00
Zinc	0.90	+0.00
Nickel	1.20	+0.00
Lead	0.70	+0.00
Iron Ore	1.00	+0.00

LONDON METAL FIXES

Commodity	Price	Change
Gold	380.00	+0.00
Silver	16.00	+0.00
Copper	1.50	+0.00
Aluminum	0.80	+0.00
Zinc	0.90	+0.00
Nickel	1.20	+0.00
Lead	0.70	+0.00
Iron Ore	1.00	+0.00

SOURCE: S&P COMSTOCK (DATE 15-APR-98)

Tel Aviv

Stocks slipped yesterday as the outlook for export profits was dampened by a stronger shekel and amid concern that fluctuations in exchange rates, prompted by the Bank of Israel's plans to ease restrictions on the currency, will destabilize the economy and hurt growth.

Tadrian dropped 2.7 percent to NIS 157.8, and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., which sells drugs abroad, lost 1.3 percent to 328.70.

The Maof Index of 25 largest companies dropped 0.24 percent to 328.70.

The shekel strengthened 0.8 percent to 3.72 against the US dollar, following a 1.8 percent drop in the currency Tuesday. In the last two weeks, the shekel has fallen by more than 4 percent.

"The main player right now is the dollar" exchange rate, said Dror Kraus, a broker at Koor Investments. Yesterday's shekel strengthening "depressed the market. It's not good for exporters."

A shekel devaluation helps the profits of companies that sell abroad by allowing them to export in more valuable dollars and cover production costs in weaker local currency.

The market is also being pulled down by wider swings in the daily exchange rate, analysts said. Central bank and Finance Ministry officials expect the volatility in currency markets to continue in the days ahead.

"Dramatic shocks" in the exchange rate "are not good for companies and not good for the market," said Boaz Leviatan, an analyst at Sahar Securities. "You need stability for economic growth."

Investors are concerned as the

government is expected to continue easing currency restrictions in the weeks ahead, although it has not disclosed the details of its plans.

Cla Industries and Investments Ltd. added 0.05 percent to 19.5. The holding company this week purchased a 9.3 percent stake in Nexus Telecommunication Systems Ltd. for NIS 22 million in an effort to expand investments in technology companies with high growth potential.

Europe

UK stocks were mixed, as drug stocks fell amid concern over slow growth in the industry and financial companies gained on merger speculation.

The benchmark FTSE 100 index slid 30.0 points to 6074.1, led by SmithKline Beecham Plc. Drug stocks wiped more than 23 points from the index where 45 companies rose, 55 fell and 3 were unchanged.

SmithKline, the Anglo-American drugmaker that aborted merger talks with American Home Products Corp. in January and with Glaxo Wellcome Plc. a month later, sought yesterday to answer concerns over whether it could maintain strong growth without another merger.

"There was nothing special in SmithKline's presentations - nothing new was presented," said Graham Campbell, a fund manager at Edinburgh Fund Managers Plc., which controls about 4.5 billion in assets.

Analysts said they were concerned there are too few major drugs in the late stages of development to supplant the expected decline of its antibiotic Augmentin and antidepressant Paxil when they face generic competition in



Maof 328.7 +0.24%

Dow Jones 9162 +0.5%

FTSE 6074.1 +0.49%

Nikkei 16299.3 +9.14%

coming years. SmithKline fell 39.5p to 749, Glaxo Wellcome Plc. lost 32p to 1,722 and Zeneca Plc. fell 84p to 2,652.

Stocks pared gains in the morning after the minutes of the Bank of England's March Monetary Policy Committee meeting showed the central bank is split on whether to raise interest rates. The minutes showed central bank Governor Eddie George cast the deciding vote to leave interest rates unchanged at 7.25 percent, when the eight committee members split four-to-four over whether to raise rates.

"It's clear from minutes of the meeting and other reports that there is divided opinion," said John Parrot, the head of research at Commercial Union Asset Management, which has about £6b. under management. "I think the problem that they seem to be wrestling with is this one of trying to keep control of consumer spending without doing further damage to manufacturing."

Higher interest rates raise company borrowing costs, making corporate growth both difficult and expensive.

Shekel recovers 0.8% against dollar

By DAVID HARRIS and agencies

The shekel yesterday regained 0.798 percent of its dollar value, with the Bank of Israel's representative rate settling at NIS 3.728.

The shekel's appreciation followed a 1.788 percent fall in its value in trading between Thursday and Tuesday, the last two days, on which the central bank set a representative rate.

Meanwhile, the basket of major currencies was pegged back below the NIS 4 mark to NIS 3.9939, a 0.53 percent decline compared to Tuesday's all-time high rate. Changes in the four remaining components of the basket were less sharp than that of the dollar. The German mark and French franc both appreciated slightly against the shekel to NIS 2.0682 (+0.068 percent) and NIS 0.6169 (+0.032 percent) respectively. The British pound fell against the shekel 0.253 percent to NIS 6.2671 and the yen 0.4 percent to NIS 2.8838.

The fluctuations in trading yesterday left the shekel 3.666 percent above the lower limit of its trading band against the basket. The band allows for appreciations and depreciations of up to 30 percent before the central bank will intervene in trading to keep the shekel inside the so-called diagonal exchange rate mechanism.

The markets continued to be jittery over government plans for foreign currency liberalization at the end of the month, said dealers.

"There's anxiety and uncertainty surrounding the [planned currency liberalization] reforms and this is making the market volatile," a dealer at United Mizrahi Bank said. "The volatility will continue because things aren't clear."

The shekel opened at 3.7160 to the dollar and then stabilized at between 3.72 and 3.73 to the dollar.

"Maybe people think interest rates won't be cut now because of the depreciation and maybe there wasn't a reason for the dollar to rise so quickly [against the shekel] in the first place," a dealer at First International Bank of Israel said.

Uncertainty regarding the impact of the reform has resulted in a sharp depreciation of the shekel in the first half of April, raising fears that inflation will accelerate in the second quarter of the year.

The First International dealer said the shekel's direction remained unclear. The market is not liquid and activity has been limited mainly to interbank trading because of Pessah, he said.

"The public is not in the market yet. The public is still in shock," he said. "We have to wait until after the holiday." The Mizrahi



Dollar 3.728 +0.798%

Basket 3.9939 +0.53%

Mark 2.0682 +0.068%

Sterling 6.2671 +0.253%

Yen 2.8838 +0.4%

Franc 0.6169 +0.032%

Pound 1.7882 +0.253%

Shekel 3.728 +0.798%

Euro 1.6667 +0.000%

Yen 2.8838 +0.4%

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Weekender

Defining a generation?

'Seinfeld' might be the funniest comedy ever, but the eulogies have gotten out of hand

By HOWARD ROSENBERG

The buzz over *Seinfeld* is building. Not just to pre-emptuate its May 14 US finale with endless loud oom-pah-pahs, but to worship reverently at the altar of the planet's funniest comedy. But also to establish the immortality of Jerry, George, Elaine and Kramer, and celebrate their lasting imprint on humankind.

How lasting?

Seinfeld defined an entire generation and changed television forever. Someone with a wild sense of humor was saying about *Seinfeld* on TV recently.

Come again?

Someone needs to get a grip. *Seinfeld* is indeed woven tightly into the fabric of pop culture and the structure of NBC, and its cast is so familiar and closely identified with the show that Jerry Seinfeld, Jason Alexander (George), Julia Louis-Dreyfus (Elaine) and Michael Richards (Kramer) can evoke laughter merely by walking onto a stage. From its geriatric, their appeal is universal.

Although the writing on *Seinfeld* has always been sophisticated, the 30 million or so who tune in every week, even during its last, least funny season, cannot all be young urbanites who relate to the weirdness of Manhattan.

As I and my wife do, my mother, age 85, watches even every rerun. Maybe it's in the genes.

And I know of an elderly man who watches the series religiously with fellow fanatics whose ages range from the early 90s.

There is clearly a common denominator, a thread linking Americans. So all of those oom-pah-pahs are deserved.

But defining an entire generation? Changing TV irreversibly? Why throw in curing cancer, too? Being wheezingly funny isn't enough.

As surely as one yada follows another, this exaggerated, bloated *Seinfeld* anointment was inevitable as the series began winding down after a historic run on NBC that began on May 5, 1999.

People were practically in tears for eulogies. We spread it around when we crank each other into the ground, and do the same when we bury memorable TV series. And in this case, *Seinfeld* is almost stratospheric in so many ways that it's tempting to call it a little better by assigning it broad sociological implications.

But consider: Despite their cohesion and hilarity as bizarre comedy characters, Jerry, George, Elaine and Kramer are selfish, paranoid, untrustworthy, thoughtless, hostile and superficial. So shallow that Jerry changes the "32" size to "31" on his jeans, and he once broke up with a girlfriend because she ate her peas one at a time.

So shallow that Elaine once decided boyfriend worthy of her treasured contraceptive sponges only when he agreed to cut his sideburns.

So shallow that Jerry, George and Kramer visit a bookstore... only for the purpose of meeting women.

The enormous flaws of *Seinfeld* characters are precisely their allure. Their misbehavior at moral and ethical crossroads is predictable, their pettiness pathological.



(From left) Jason Alexander, Jerry Seinfeld, Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Michael Richards can evoke laughter merely by walking onto a stage.

Jerry once mugged an old lady for a loaf of marble rye. And George is so callous that he could barely contain his glee when, after trying for so long to dump his fiancée, Susan, she died from licking their cheapie wedding invitation envelopes.

Seinfeld characters respond to everything viscerally. Their views of the universe and their personal relationships are driven by the same level of weightless trivia that they sit around and dissect endlessly. They're at once dependably self-absorbed and relentlessly undependable.

They're supposed to be close friends, yet unhesitatingly knife each other in the back for personal advantage.

Family dysfunction is also a constant theme. George once stole his father's clothes and once had sex in his parents' bed, leaving behind a condom. Lower their grammar a few notches, and you can see this crowd with Jerry Springer.

Watch them, of course. Love them, of course. But do they define your generation? Anyone's generation? Get serious. They don't define mine.

And what about this business of *Seinfeld* shaping television? Some series do that. On ABC, it was *Monday Night Football*, for example. On NBC, *The Tonight Show* and *Today*, and their many seedlings, have resonated across the decades. On Fox, *The Simpsons* refocused TV on prime-time animated series, initiating a contemporary trend that seems to be ever growing. And on CBS, *60 Minutes* has transformed much of television, not necessarily for the good, with prime-time now awash with its magazine-show progeny that collectively have supplanted the traditional long-form documentary as a purported source of in-depth

ment can be found at the ZOA House tonight, where Shalom Assaf performs a stand-up comedy show, at the same time as comedy routine Eli and Mariano. Both begin at 12:45 a.m.

Can't make it till midnight? Then skip the comedy and opt for music instead. Meir Suissa presents a new musical entertainment production, *Suissa Iyar*, at 10 p.m. at the ZOA. Daniel Frisch (03) 695-9341.

The theater scene tonight offers Beit Lessin's rollicking production of *The Venetian Twins* tonight at the Eretz Israel Museum at 9:30. Call (03) 696-1297.

The Cinematheque completes its fantasy series of the week with a screening of *The Lord of the Rings*. Ralph Bakshi's 1978 cartoon. Then at 10 p.m., the German-Portuguese co-production *Lisbon Story* is playing. The final word goes back to the fantasy theme, however, with *The Hobbit* at midnight. 2 Sprinkak St. (03) 691-7181.

Hard-rocker-turned-nice-boy with a healthy Latin American

sound, Paylo Rosenberg plays tonight at Logos, starting at 10 p.m. 8 Hashomer, (03) 516-1176.

A healthy dose of jazz can be found this evening at The Open Studio, featuring Uri Brachia, Papo Levy and Pancho Blumenzweig. At 24 Carmia, call (03) 685-6787.

coverage on network TV.

But *Seinfeld*?

Although other comedies have sought to mimic and follow its path of savagely goofy schmoozing, these are small footprints on the landscape of TV.

Meanwhile, comedies about nothing have been populating TV nearly since its inception. Insignificance has always been the mother's milk

of sitcomdom, in fact.

Although it never will be memorialized as scintillating, for example, *The Adventures of Oz* and *Harriet* beat *Seinfeld* to the Holy Grail of nothingness by about 37 years. Watching the micro-life of the Nelsons, each week made your own life, however bland, seem vibrant and exciting in comparison.

And from this prototype came the likes of *My Three Sons* and *The Brady Bunch*, all of which make *Seinfeld* and its own inspired nonsense seem almost meaty.

But meaty, smeary, *Seinfeld* doesn't have to define a generation or change TV to be celebrated as the funniest comedy ever.

And that is the only accolade that matters. (Los Angeles Times)

Celebrating the end

By TIM WHITMAN

New York institutions from baseball's Yankees to Radio City Music Hall are hustling to get in on celebrations of the finale of *Seinfeld*.

Some schemes are grandiose, like the big idea to shut down Times Square at La New Year's Eve for a street party and mass viewing of the hour-long final episode of the popular TV comedy series on May 14.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani vetoed that plan as too disruptive. The Yankees - *Seinfeld* friend George Costanza's one-time employer on the show - were considering seeking rights to show the finale on Yankee Stadium's jumbo screen after that night's game. *The New York Times* reported. But an NBC executive said the Yankees couldn't screen the show for a paying audience.

Radio City Music Hall even volunteered to play host for a *Seinfeld* farewell party. "Radio City is a New York institution and so is *Seinfeld*," Radio City Productions president Arlen Kantarian said, adding that the theater is across the street from NBC.

Real places, from a kosher bakery to Yankee Stadium, have served as settings in the highly rated show, and now with hype building toward the final episode, the real world is taking cues from *Seinfeld*.

The real-life counterpart of *Seinfeld*'s Cosmo Kramer said he's been deluged with May 14 party invitations. "I intend to be part of the frivolity that's going on around the city," said Kenny Kramer, who runs a "reality tour" of *Seinfeld*-related New York sites. He said he plans to spend the day with a radio station and attend a *New York Times* party at a comedy club.

Some radio stations are giving away trips to New York and tickets to Kramer's tour as part of *Seinfeld* farewell promotions.

Actually, the show is filmed in Los Angeles.

For nine seasons, Jerry, Elaine, George, Kramer and the irritating mailman Newman have been dealing with several only-in-New York topics such as apartment hunting and taking heat from the "Soup Nazi," the temperamental purveyor of gourmet soups.

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The Conceptual Role of Women in the Bible. 9 a.m. (02) 625-4321.

Take the kids even if it's not raining: The Israel Museum has free entry today, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Musical intrigue in Jerusalem will put listeners in a holiday spirit, from the Christian perspective: The International Organ Concert takes place in the Old City, at the Redeemer Church tonight at 8 p.m. Attendees may also meet at the Jaffa Gate at 7:40 p.m. Call (02) 627-6111.

And Points Beyond

Hasmita Theater in Old Jaffa is showing *The Fall* at 10:30 p.m., and at 9 p.m. *Superior Beings*, a tale of a couple on a murder spree, directed by Niko Ntai. 8 Mazal Dagim, (03) 681-2126.

Cheerier content is found at Puppet Theater today at Ein Hod, starting at 11 a.m., at the Circus Tent.

No Thursday is complete without the blues: Ronnie Peterson and his blues band perform tonight

NBC executives did not return phone messages seeking comment on the network's plans for a *Seinfeld* party.

This being New York, some people need their *Seinfeld* send-off to have plenty of urban cool and cachet, which explains the rush to rent some of New York's best-known settings.

Tom's Restaurant is instantly recognizable to *Seinfeld* viewers. The facade of the eatery at Broadway and 112th Street is used as the exterior of Monk's, where the main characters hang out.

Maxim magazine issued a statement bragging that it had rented Tom's for May 14 - a deal it breathlessly labeled as "the publishing party coup of the year." Maxim said it had invited "150+ movers and shakers" and would show the finale on giant TVs outside.

On the street, some fans shrugged off the hype surrounding the finale.

"I'll probably just watch it at home," Cliff Paulson said.

Steve Fiegel was even more underwhelmed, saying people planning *Seinfeld* parties "need to get a life." (AP)

at Tivon, starting at 10 p.m. (04) 983-7043.

Television

Profiles of the world's famous musicians is the television theme tonight: ITV 3 airs *In the World Tonight*, at 11:30 p.m., a documentary about Paul McCartney - specifically, the making of his latest album. Never fear - footage of the Beatles is included. No less important than Sir Paul is Elmad Manor, whose life is presented by Shlomo Artzi at an even more accessible hour, 9 p.m., on Channel 1.

Movie night is varied, ranging from morbid to solemn to good old romance. Respectively: *Flesh and Blood*, by Paul Verhoeven, stars the ever-sinister Rutger Hauer and the generally gritty Jennifer Jason Leigh, on the Movie Channel at 11:55 p.m. *Family Pictures* airs at 2:30 p.m. on Channel 3. And the incessantly feel-good *Indiscreet*, starring Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman, is on Second Showing at 10:15 p.m.

Chaos in Archaos

By SOME LEMOR

It's Friday night in Jerusalem. The shops are closed, the streets are full of 12-year-olds, you're all dressed up with nowhere to go.

Well in Tel Aviv you'll find Archaos. This nightclub opens its doors only at 12:30 a.m. and closes in the early hours of the morning. At 5 a.m. people are still there having fun in their black PVC micro-mini skirts and ripped jeans.

"People come from all over to our club," says publicist Ori Koren. "Archaos gets a strong Tel Aviv crowd every week." Koren's colleague Kobi Segev says the club has issued more than 850 membership cards since it opened in November 1986. The club was completely renovated two months ago.

The three owners - Ori Levi, Lior Rachmani, and Amos Yossef - are not new to the party profession. Levi is resident DJ and also hosts a program on the local FM station, Radio Yehudaim: "Calli Out" on Fridays at 10 p.m.-2 a.m. Rachmani is also a Radio Yehudaim DJ, hosting "Smart Aleck" on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11 p.m.-12 a.m. The three partners have worked in nightclubs since the Eighties.

Archaos has two levels and a garden bar. The first floor, called Archaos, is industrial-looking, dark and metallic. To enter, you walk through a small utility hallway that is painted black. On the floor Levi plays the latest tracks in Trance and House music.

To get to the garden bar, you go outside and through a gate which leads into the garden. With its trees and grass and wooden bar, "it feels sort of like a backyard party," says Julie, an American tourist.

The bartender, who was probably hired for his looks, was leaning on the bar watching the crowd, and owners Rachmani and Levi were greeting regulars as I arrived.

The second floor of the club is called Exit, which you enter by climbing the metal stairs leading from the garden bar and up into the loud music of DJ Itzik Dor. Dor plays hits from the Eighties as well as popular current rock and some R&B.

"Exit is small and reminds me of a basement party," says Itay, a law student in Jerusalem. "But it's definitely fun."

There's a huge window on one side from which you can see the lower level Archaos club.

Archaos produces its own CDs. The first, *Mixer 1*, has sold over 8,000 copies since it came out in July. *Mixer 2* came out last week and has already sold more than 1,000 copies. It's a double disc of music played at the club, with Levi as DJ and Yoram Vazana doing the mix.

On Thursdays Archaos is closed and Exit's space is rented out to Carmie, who owned the recently closed Gotham pub. He's started throwing "Shaka" parties, where alternative music is played. "We're not connected with Archaos, we just rent the space. 'Shaka' is a totally different concept," says Carmie.

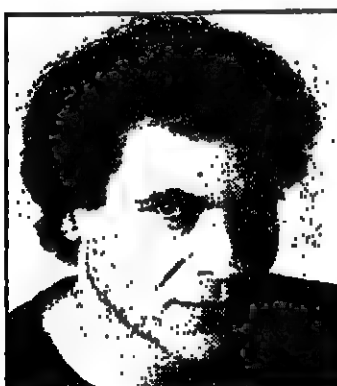
Archaos is open Fridays from 12:30 a.m. until dawn with a cover charge of NIS 50, NIS 40 with an invitation, and NIS 30 with a student card. Invitations can be obtained at Shesh Cafe, Rehov Ha Soreg 1.

Archaos can also be rented out for private parties, semester blowouts, weddings or anything else. "You have to experience the chaos to know Archaos," says Kobi Segev. Call him for details at 052-679-116 or Ori Koren at 050-586-672.

Archaos, 2 Ha'oman St., Talpiot, Jerusalem

Drama on my mind

Theater director Jack Messinger talks about his favorite plays



2. *Peter Pan* (1904) by Sir James M. Barrie

"It was the first play I ever saw - at age five or six - and it left me with an enduring fascination for the magic of theater. Peter is a perfect role model for artists. He keeps alive the child within, collects frequent-flyer points to Never-Never Land while remaining heroically faithful to his friends and 'family,' to his own shadow, and to Tinkerbell."

3. *Hamlet* (1603) by William Shakespeare

"This is still my favorite of Shakespeare's plays (*Richard II* runs a close second). I've seen probably two dozen different productions of the play. My favorite was videotaped on location in Elsinore with Christopher Plummer playing the prince. The thing about *Hamlet* is that it fits every generation. Each actor makes a new *Hamlet* for his time, and every good production seems like a modern revival."

4. *Spring Awakening* (1981) by Frank Wedekind

"This is the play I most recently directed at Nissan Nativ Acting Studio in Jerusalem, and it was a revelation to me. It tells of the effects of a brilliant yet authoritarian society on its youth at the time of their sexual awakening; it is subtitled 'A Tragedy of Childhood.' Its combination of psychological acuity and totally original theatricality is stunningly modern. Preaching for moral balance between the dualities of freedom and responsibility, the play is a disturbing reminder that the German culture that fomented the Holocaust of hate also produced pinnacles of humanistic achievement."

5. *My Mother's Courage* (1979) by George Tabori

"Originally a radio play, this is post-Brechtian Hungarian writer Tabori's ironically autobiographical attempt to tell the story of how his mother saved herself from the Auschwitz death camps. He casts himself as the Son who is confronted by the Mother in a life vs. art quarrel over the story's details. By using distancing techniques of satire, cabaret and slapstick, Tabori produces a warmly personal, easily digested, and very powerful Holocaust drama."

Before immigrating, Messinger spent years acting, directing and teaching in North America. He received a degree in English Literature from the University of Toronto and earned a Masters in drama from Yale University.

He currently gives workshops for Hebrew- and English-speaking actors in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

1. *The Seagull* (1895) by Anton Chekhov

"I've directed this, my all-time favorite play, on two occasions: as a location docudrama on William Styron's Connecticut estate - with Nina entering on a real horse; and, more recently, as my initial directorial effort in Israel, at the Seminar HaKibbutzim in my own adaptation in which Kostya's play-within-a-play becomes a Greek chorus. Chekhov's own concerns about the nature of the artist - writer or actor - are beautifully expressed in this richly human, sad and funny play."

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Hot tips

By DAHLIA SCHEINDLIN

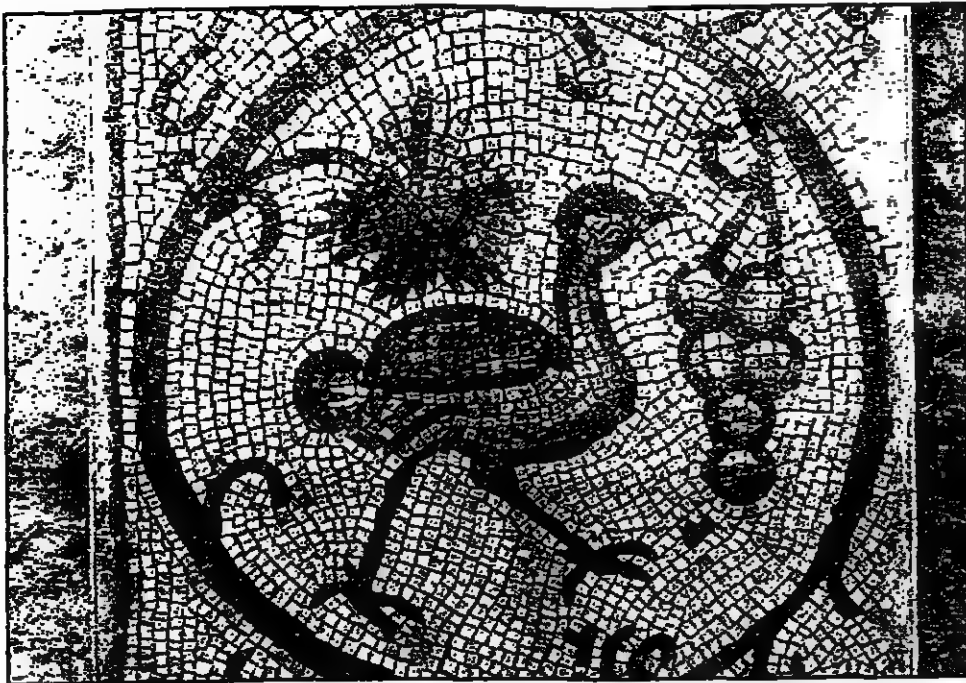
Tel Aviv

Don't take the holidays too seriously - take in laughs instead! Tel Aviv is bursting with comedy tonight, as Dudu Milman and Roi Levy perform *Megalomania*, their new stand-up comic duet, tonight at Tzavta at 9:30.

Tzavta 2 continues the side-splitting with *Nonsense*, at 10:30 p.m., featuring Adir Miller, Asi Cohen and a full range of humorous others.

But Tel Aviv audiences are insatiable: still more comic entertain-

Weekender Travel



On display at the Bible Lands Museum in the special exhibition "Sacred Bounty Sacred Land": (Left) Composite floor, stone tesserae, 475-525 C.E.; (right) Statue of Bacchus, bronze, 1st Century C.E. Both show the prevalence of grapes in ancient mythology. (Photos: Yoram Leshman)



Threads of the ancient world

The Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, which is based primarily on the private collection of its founder, Dr. Elie Borowski, displays objects that depict religious myths and scenes of everyday life from the ancient Near East.

These objects are far more than an eclectic assortment of items from disparate lands and cultures. They draw together the threads connecting the cultures of the ancient world.

This goal is perhaps best realized in the museum's latest exhibition, Sacred Bounty Sacred Land, The Seven Species of the Land of Israel.

This exhibition, which seems far more extensive than other special shows mounted by the museum, has culled objects from a wide variety of sources, including private collections and museums in the US, Austria and Germany, as well as Israel.

Although the exhibition is presented in celebration of the state's jubilee, it is highly appropriate that it opened before Passah, the beginning of the counting of the Omer, when the sheaf offering of the new harvest was brought to the Temple.

The species include wheat, barley, the fruit of the vine, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey. These species are common among other cultures in the Middle East as well.

In the imagery, it is often difficult to distinguish between wheat and barley. But, according to museum guide Gidon Yisraeli, wheat is often considered female, while barley is regarded as male.

Among the exhibits in this section is a corn

Day Tripper By Haim Shapiro

mummy from Egypt – a miniature mummy in human form containing grain rather than a body. The exhibit also contains coins depicting ears of wheat, attesting to a commerce of grain from Southern Italy to Greece in the fourth century BCE.

In terms of comparison, the most striking species is the fruit of the vine. Yisraeli points out that the Jews tended to view the grape as a blessing, while those around them stressed the influence of alcohol. One can see the classic figures of mythology holding up bunches of grapes.

However, there are also similarities, the most impressive of which is a large lamp from Carthage in North Africa, dating from the fourth or fifth century CE. It shows two men carrying a pole from which hangs a huge bunch of grapes. It is the same theme used in Jewish sources to represent the spies sent to the Land of Canaan. This symbol is used today by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.

As might be expected in an exhibit on this theme, there are many examples of actual produce from antiquity which have been preserved to this day.

The exhibit is dotted with notices explaining that the lighting has had to be dimmed for exhibits containing organic matter, to keep

them from disintegrating.

One showcase contains a jar from Ekron, almost intact, from the 13th century BCE. The one broken side exposes row upon row of dried figs, threaded on a rope, just as they are often sold today.

In fact, while the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge has often been represented as an apple in Western iconography, the Babylonian Talmud and many midrashim maintain that it was the fig.

In Jewish tradition, the fig is linked with wisdom and Torah – in stark contrast to the classical image of the fig as the attribute of the phallic god Priapus.

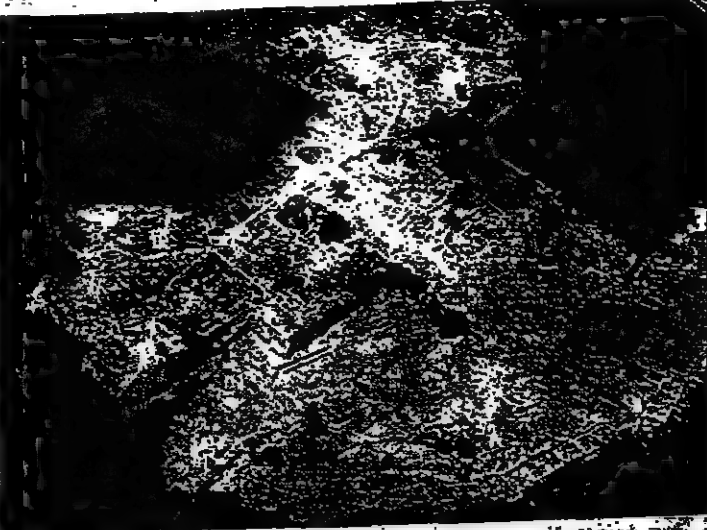
Pomegranates are represented in gold jewelry, including a very modern-looking necklace with a series of dangling golden pomegranates. It is with the date palm, though, that one feels the closest link to Jewish sources. Among the images of palms is one etched on a jar discovered at the Ophel site in Jerusalem attributed to the Iron Age.

Another palm tree is represented on an ivory plaque from Samaria, very possibly from the ivory palace built by the evil King Ahab. Another palm tree is found on a mosaic from a sixth century CE synagogue from Hammam Lif, the ancient Carthage in North Africa.

The Bible Lands Museum is open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., on Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., on Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is NIS 23 for adults, NIS 12 for children.

Apocalypse then

Close Encounters By Allan Rabinowitz



An aerial view of Tel Megiddo.

(Werner Braun)

Imagine a great Egyptian

army, 3,500 years ago, under Pharaoh Thutmose III, marching north along the coastal dunes of Israel until, near today's Hadara power station, the army cuts northeast into the rolling hills.

The path it follows, later dubbed the Via Maris (Way of the Sea) by the Romans, is already well-worn and ancient, connecting Egypt to that other anchor of civilization, Mesopotamia, through the long-arching swath of settlement and roads known as the Fertile Crescent.

But in Israel the Fertile Crescent has narrowed to a buckled, stony labyrinth, and the Egyptian army is now traversing the highest part of the narrow pass of Nahal Eron, or Wadi Ann. And where that defile meets the expansive Jezreel Valley, the junction called Megiddo, Thutmose must face a coalition of Canaanite kings, gathered by the hilltop fortress to block his passage. He smashes them, and the Egyptian inscription of that battle is the earliest mention of Megiddo.

But Megiddo, guarded that vital junction for the preceding two thousand years and continued in that role for another thousand years.

The archaeological dig, now a national park, is some 23 layers thick. But only a spot, apparently clearly demonstrates the power of geography in shaping the course of ancient Israel, then this city-fortress on a hill, literally straddling the crossroads of the world.

Before climbing the tel, watch the excellent video in the main hall of the visitor center, then visit the model of the site itself.

The video dramatically conveys, in an almost microcosmic sense, the ongoing human struggles, at military, political and religious levels, personified and exemplified by this one site.

The model, with its movable levels, helps to make sense of the location of the main features on the site and the overlapping and

intersecting between structures from various epochs.

The extensive excavations make it easy to visualize the ancient reality.

The hill stands apart from other hills in the region, and the parameters which would have been lined by walls are clearly delineated.

The Solomonic ramp leading up to the city, upon which royal chariots charged and then proved sharply into the city gate complex, is clearly discernible, as is the gate complex itself, with its individual guard chambers and its finely embossed and tiled stones.

Securities on the gateway would have stood above the gates, gazed out across the great valley and announced the arrival of an army or a diplomatic delegation of the king himself.

For Megiddo was the most central of Solomon's fortified cities.

Peering behind the ramp of gates, palaces, and military stables, we can picture the centralized authority and the political calculations that the shrewd monarch implemented there.

Built on the backs of Jewish workers from the northern tribes of Israel and defeated Canaanite minorities, a secure Megiddo would have been a strong base to guard the routes of the kingdom.

King Ahab, the last of the early kings of the northern kingdom of Israel, though famous a match smaller kingdom, also invested the resources of the centralized rule in securing Megiddo.

His gate structure is sealed with Solomon's.

The stairs for foot traffic, upon which perhaps the prophet Elijah once trod, still stand from the bottom steps to the top of the hillside.

From the observation point on the top of this man-made mound,

you can gaze north to Mt. Tabor, along which the ancient trade and military route stretched toward the Sea of Galilee, then Damascus, then Assyria and Babylon.

You can clearly picture ancient armies clashing before you in the Jezreel Valley, which functioned as a trade, military and migration route, as well as a rich grain-growing region.

Read Chronicles II (25:22) on this platform and you can practically see King Josiah of Judah, in 609, clambering through the Samaritan hills to cut off the Egyptians at this pass, only to be slain.

So intertwined with the ancient struggle for power is this spot, that in the Book of Revelations in the New Testament, a huge battle between good and evil is prophesied to be fought on the plain of Armageddon. (Derived from the Hebrew, Har Megiddon, which means "hill of battle.")

Indeed, even in modern times, from the time of Napoleon's World War to the Israeli War of Independence – battles were fought here. Armageddon, the symbolic term for many versions of modern apocalypse, takes its name from this seemingly perpetual battlefield.

A large grain silo, the only such one found in the country, dating from the ninth century BCE, highlights Megiddo's role as a central grain depot even after the split of the two kingdoms. The stables which held the horses of Ahab's chariot force, the troughs from which they drank, and the square on which they were trained, are clearly visible.

But nothing demonstrates the central role of Megiddo in Ahab's time better than the sophisticated water system which he built.

Megiddo had a real problem with water. The spring that supplied the population with water lay outside the walls. To secure their source, King Ahab dug through the earlier layers of habitation and sank a deep vertical shaft into the bedrock. He then

connected it via a horizontal tunnel to a deep pool, gouged deep in the bedrock outside the walls, into which the spring waters were diverted. It is a beautifully, necessarily ingenious system.

While the dig itself is a sight to behold, the system is a masterpiece and highly recommended (though it means descending about 185 steps and ascending 90).

You'll emerge near a parking lot outside the park and walk back to the main visitor center, unless your transportation can be arranged to meet you there.

Megiddo is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily during winter, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during summer (already in place). Closing an hour earlier on Fridays. Entry to the water tunnel costs 15 minutes before 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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1. They immigrated to Israel before July 1, 1990, and hold Israeli citizenship.
2. They accumulated periods of work in East European countries. (See note* after Para. 3.)
3. During the period in which the influence of National Socialism spread to what was then the applicant's homeland, the applicant's language and culture were German, and he/she was then aged 15 or over. Pension applicants will be invited to pass a German language test.

* Applicants for an old age pension must obtain documents from social insurance institutes in East European countries, testifying that they have worked in these countries. These documents must be sent to Germany. A widow or widower who applies for a survivors' pension should send to Germany documents, testifying that his/her spouse worked in these countries.

The German law recognizes the following, as substantiation of the required work periods:

Original documents, declarations by witnesses, sworn statements.

A sworn statement can be accepted as proof, only if the claimant has not succeeded in obtaining other substantiating documents, and only if he/she has requested and obtained agreement from the German social security institute, to accept such a statement.

If you have obtained a declaration form from Germany, you should complete it and bring it to the National Insurance Institute for authentication and stamping. You should come to one of the following offices, bringing your identity card:

1. National Insurance Institute Liaison Office for International Agreements, Head Office, 11 Rehov Hazvi, Jerusalem, Tel. 02-670-9913; Sunday to Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
2. Jerusalem branch office of the National Insurance Institute, 4 Rehov Ben Shetah, Tel. 02-675-5450, Sun., Tue., Thur., 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon.
3. Tel Aviv branch office of the National Insurance Institute, 15 Rehov Masaryk, 03-697-1327, Sun., Tue., Thur., 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

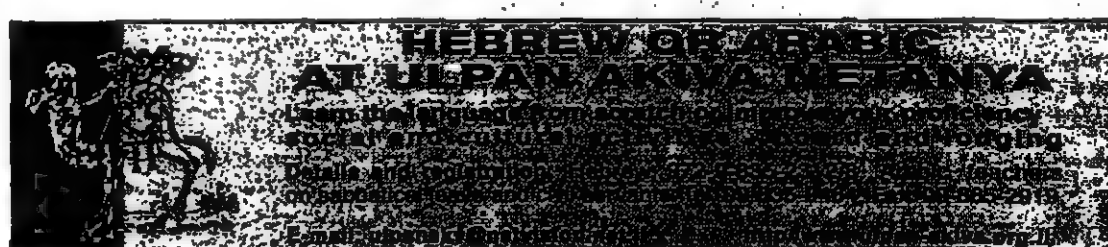
Submission of Claims:

Applications should be submitted on the "Addendum to Agreement" form. These forms and an explanatory booklet can be obtained at any National Insurance Institute branch, or by calling 02-670-9913, 02-670-9393, 02-670-9637. Sunday to Thursday, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. The completed form should be submitted to the NII branch nearest your home or sent to the National Insurance Institute, Liaison Office for International Agreements, POB 90009, Jerusalem 91909.

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Information & Public Relations Department

When Tony Blair comes calling

High expectations will be riding on Tony Blair when he arrives in Israel on Sunday afternoon. Fresh from his triumph in negotiating a framework agreement to the 300-year-old conflict between Irish Protestants and Catholics last weekend, the pragmatic, can-do British prime minister will be seeking to repeat his peace-making magic in the Middle East.

Bearing a mandate from the 15-nation European Union, of which he holds the current presidency, and carrying the blessing of US President Bill Clinton, with whom he has established a close personal and political relationship, Blair will be seeking to break the impasse and resuscitate the stalled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Through circumstance and contrivance, Blair will be able to deploy a diplomatic armory that far exceeds Britain's innate capabilities as a medium-rank European power.

He has said he regards the peace process as "one of the most important foreign policy priorities for Britain" during its current presidency of the European Union.

"Failure" and "disappointment" are not frequently recurring words in the Blair political lexicon. Beyond the appearance of boyish charm and earnest rhetoric is a political will of steel and a determination that borders on ruthlessness.

Charm alone did not allow him to snatch the leadership of his party three years ago at the age of just 41, to revolutionize a political movement that had been unelectable for almost two decades, and then to lead it to a crushing victory last May. "He is," in the words of a senior diplomat in London who clearly admires the Blair style, "an operator with a very cool head and a very hard nose."

Tony Blair has traveled a long way since his days as lead singer in the rock group Ugly Rumors while studying law at Oxford University. It is likely that, having already reached the summit of political achievement in Britain, he still has a long way to go.

Blair will never repeat the boorish behavior of Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, whose visit to Israel last month was intended to lay

the groundwork for his prime minister's trip, but ended in diplomatic disaster, leaving a trail of bitterness and mistrust.

British and Israeli officials have since worked overtime to repair the damage caused by Cook's meeting with a Palestinian official at Har Homa — in violation of a prior agreement with Jerusalem — and the subsequent cancellation of a dinner in his honor by Prime Minister Netanyahu.

"We believe that much of the derelict has now been removed," said one official. "There will be no scope for unpleasant surprises on this trip."

Preparations for Blair's visit — via intense consultations with Israelis, Palestinians, European partners and, perhaps most significantly, with Washington — have been painstaking and meticulous to avoid a repetition of the Cook fiasco and to ensure maximum success for Blair. Unlike Cook, who passed up an invitation to visit Yad Vashem so he could lay a wreath in memory of the Arabs killed at Deir Yassin, the Holocaust memorial will be the first stop on Blair's itinerary when he and his wife, Cherie, arrive in Jerusalem on Sunday afternoon.

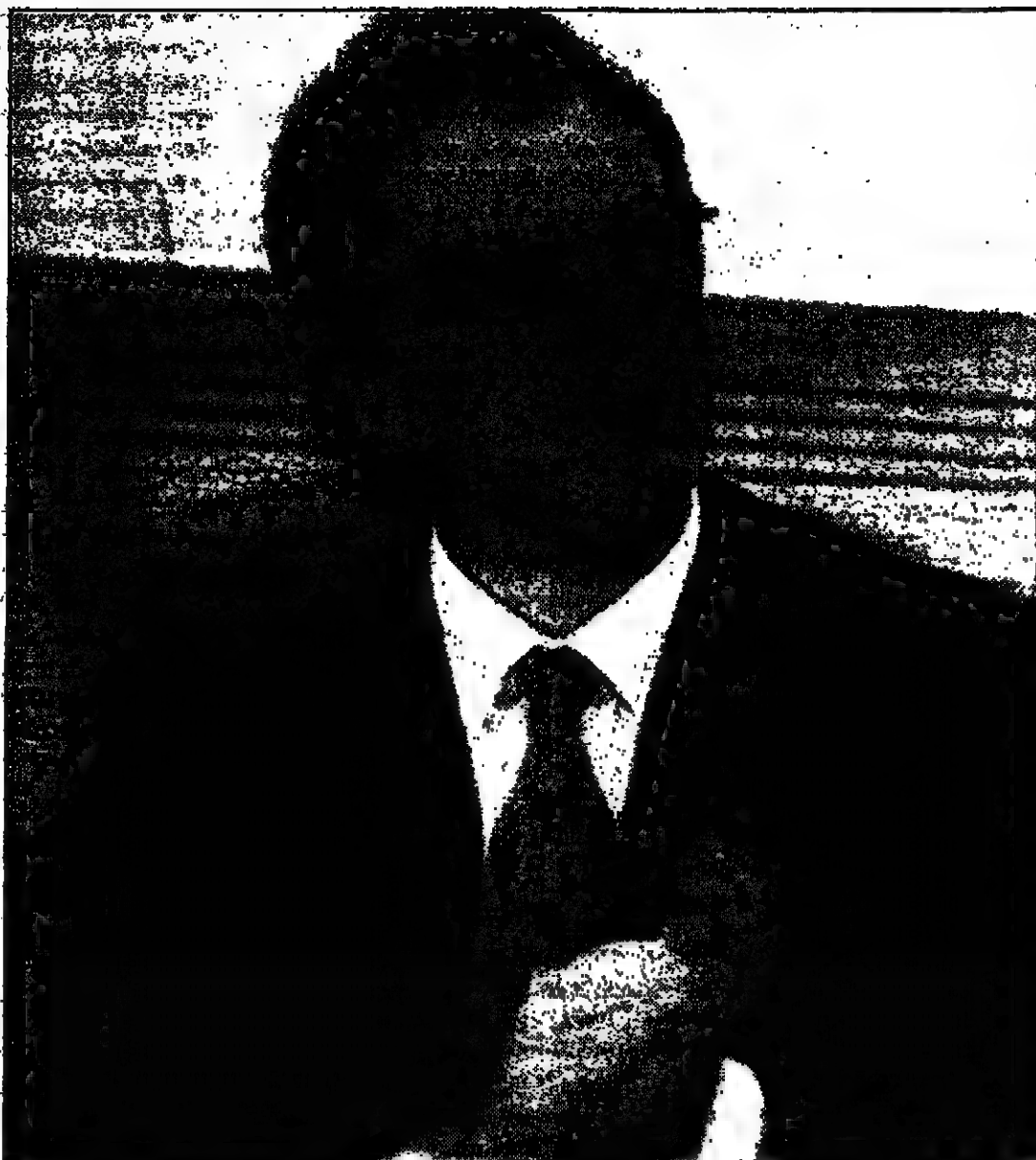
A proposal for Blair to spend a night in Gaza — unprecedented for a national leader — was triumphantly and prematurely leaked by a senior Palestinian official in London. After protests from Israel, the plan was quietly shelved and Blair's visit to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will be strictly a day trip (he will spend one night in Jerusalem and another in Tel Aviv).

Blair, who has been unimpeached and unequivocal about hitching his foreign policy wagon to the US (allowing Britain to "punch above its weight" diplomatically), has also drawn on the advice and counsel of State Department peace coordinator Dennis Ross, who visited London last week to brief officials at the Foreign Office on potentially fruitful areas for Blair to mine.

While Cook appeared determined to provoke a confrontation, Blair will be seeking conciliation. While Cook comes from a tradition of hard-line, sympathy for Israel, Blair is a visceral ally. Blair's personal political campaign was

In his first visit to Israel as prime minister, it will take all of Blair's charm and steel will to convince Binyamin Netanyahu that Europe can be trusted to be an evenhanded player in the peace process.

Douglas Davis reports from London



Tony Blair does not intend to repeat the boorish behavior of Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, but that doesn't mean he won't be tough.

and after the election, to court the electorally insignificant Jewish community, with whom he appears to have developed a genuine empathy. "How wonderful it is to be among friends," were his opening words at a dinner in his honor by a pro-Israel lobby last December. He was, said a longtime Blair-watcher, "speaking from the heart."

One of the "proudest achievements" of his revolutionized New Labor Party, Blair told his pro-Israel hosts, is that it is no longer considered politically incorrect to be a friend of Israel. Netanyahu will also have been heartened to hear Blair's outspoken conviction that the phrase "peace with security" is "not a

slogan of extremism, but a basic right of a people that has not known real security all its days."

In an interview with the Arabic-language daily *al-Hayat*, which was intended to balance the books, Blair refused to be drawn into blaming Netanyahu for the lack of progress in the peace process.

"I do not think it would be wise for a prime minister to start apportioning blame at a time when negotiations are already at a very sensitive stage," he said. "If we are to make progress in the peace process, it is important to avoid a climate of blame and mutual recrimination."

"The key principles are that all sides should adhere fully and unconditionally to the commitments they have made and that they should approach the negotiating process in a spirit of good faith and mutual respect," he stated in the article.

"For the Palestinians, this means, in particular, maximum and sustained effort in combating terrorism. There can be no justification for the scenes of carnage which we witnessed on the streets of Jerusalem last summer. Such attacks represent a moral outrage and a human tragedy. They also damage confidence among Israelis and make progress in the peace process more difficult."

But neither Netanyahu nor Arafat can expect an easy time when Blair comes calling. Heading his agenda will be a clutch of well-rehearsed issues: Palestinian security arrangements, the removal of obstacles to Palestinian economic development, further Israeli redeployments, a settlement freeze, the opening of the Karni industrial park, the establishment of a Gaza airport and the creation of "safe passage" routes between Gaza and Palestinian-controlled areas in the West Bank.

The tangible results of the visit, according to those who have been close to the intense negotiations that have preceded it, are likely to be a commitment to fund the Karni park and the adoption of Netanyahu's suggestion last week for Britain to combine its technical know-how with European funding to build a safe-passage tunnel or overpass for the Palestinians.

But Blair's ambitions during his two days in Israel and Gaza will transcend attempts to resolve at least some of the technical details that are outstanding from the Hebron and interim agreements.

The European Union perceives its \$1.8 billion contribution to the Palestinian Authority over the past five years as threatened by

the stalemate in the peace process, and it is now seeking to protect its investment by claiming a seat, alongside the US, at the center of peace diplomacy, where it will be able to translate its economic muscle into political clout.

It will take all of Tony Blair's considerable diplomatic skills and persuasive powers to convince Netanyahu that Europe can be trusted to be an evenhanded, positive force for genuine progress. But, again, achieving miracles has become Blair's stock in trade.

While acknowledging Israel's predicament and endorsing the dictum of "peace with security," Blair is no Likudnik. Still, there might be just enough chemistry on both sides — and just enough perception of mutual advantage — to contemplate the possibility of a deeper relationship between Blair and Netanyahu.

In a curious way (whisper it not to British officials), there is more than a passing similarity between the two men — in style, if not in substance. Blair and Netanyahu represent a new breed of pragmatic, young political leader. Both exert enormous personal power and both have surrounded themselves with aides who, though unelected, exercise considerable influence in their own right. Both leaders regard themselves as masters, rather than servants, of their parties, which both perceive as vehicles for their own brand of governance. And both have certain impatience for the parliamentary process.

Beneath the engaging smiles and prepared sound bites are two highly focused leaders who know exactly where they are going and how they are going to get there, even if they remain, as both do, essentially enigmatic to their constituents.

But there is one critical difference in their personal styles: While Netanyahu apparently stands aloof, giving his critics a free ride, Blair has been an assiduous practitioner of "inclusiveness," a byword of his administration. And he has demonstrated a prodigious talent for co-option. It was no surprise, then, that he invited former political foe John Major to help him "sell" the framework agreement in Northern Ireland.

"Tony doesn't believe in having enemies," one of his close advisers said last week. "He simply forces them to be his friends." It is a lesson Netanyahu might learn — if indeed he does not become its victim — when Tony Blair brings his glitzy show to town on Sunday.

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Poised for power

Walk into coalition chairman Meir Sheerit's elegant and spacious home in Yavne, and the first, overwhelming impression is that this is a family that likes flowers — a lot of flowers.

There are three bouquets on the dining room table, and a couple in the living room. There are flowers in the corridor, and bouquets in the den. These are not just a few long stemmed carnations bought at some roadside stand to decorate the house for Pesach. These are serious looking flowers, flower-shop-looking flowers, expensive-looking flowers.

"You should have seen the house last week," Sheerit says, explaining why his home is in bloom. Pointing to his living room, which is so big that a white upright piano at one side seems to take up no room at all, he adds:

"This whole area was full of bouquets. We had to get rid of them. They came from all over the country."

The florists started ringing the Sheerit doorbell soon after the Jerusalem District Court acquitted the Likud faction whip of fraud last week. "Even Rafi Peled sent some flowers," Sheerit says, referring to the former police inspector-general.

"I said after the verdict was read that a heavy burden has been lifted from my shoulders," the MK says, stating the very obvious. The acquittal, he has made clear since, has also removed a mighty barrier that was keeping him from taking up what he feels is his rightful place among the Likud top brass.

"I KNEW that while I was in the middle of the legal process I could not be a cabinet minister, or deputy minister," Sheerit says. "Not that it was forbidden by law — but it is not something that would hold up in a High Court appeal."

"But now everything is open. If there is another Likud appointment to the cabinet, I don't see how Bibi [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] can pass me over. I am one of the most veteran [Likud] MKs in the house, outside [Tourism Minister Moshe] Katsav and [Jerusalem Mayor Ehud] Olmert."

Sheerit maintains that from all vantage points — seniority, experience, accomplishments in public service — he is "a number of grades above" all the Likud cabinet ministers.

"I was mayor in Yavne in 1973, and built the city from almost nothing. I was in government before the Likud was in government," he says, letting out a roaring laugh.

In the short term, Sheerit, 49, has his designs set on the foreign ministry. In the long term, after Netanyahu leaves the stage, he sees himself as running for prime minister. He made a brief challenge for the Likud leadership in 1993, but dropped out of the race well before the primaries.

Sheerit, who became a mayor at 24 and an MK at 31, has never been accused of being short on ambition.

Buoyed after his acquittal on fraud charges, coalition whip Meir Sheerit now sees his way open to being first foreign minister, then premier. Herb Keiron interviews him

Now, thanks to Judge Michaela Sidlovsky-Orr's decision, his ambition has ample room to roam.

SHEERIT was indicted in 1994 on suspicion of defrauding the Jewish Agency, where he served as treasurer from 1988 to 1992, of \$20,000. He had been accused of using a business credit card for personal purchases and of treating his family to a trip abroad at the agency's expense.

Immediately after his investigation began, Sheerit voluntarily decided to lift his Knesset immunity and face the charges.

"I realized immediately that the only road I could travel was to go directly to court. All other roads

takes a long time, costs a lot of money, damages the person's name and punishes the public figure from day one. I've remained outside the government until today because of this," he says. "It cannot be fixed retroactively," he adds.

Sheerit charges that his investigation was politically inspired by Labor higher-ups concerned that he would win the Histadrut elections in 1993. In the end he didn't run, because Netanyahu opted for another candidate, Ya'acov Shamai.

This time around Netanyahu was interested in having Sheerit run against Histadrut Chairman Amir Peretz and Maxim Levy in the June union elections, but Sheerit declined.

'If Bibi wants a spokesman who can show the world that the Likud is interested in peace, I am the answer. I have a good name in the world, and among the Arabs'

would leave me tarnished. If I used Knesset immunity, or if I went to a special hearing with the attorney-general, someone would always say there was a case against me, and that, for some reason, it was closed. Only an acquittal would remove all doubt."

With his acquittal Sheerit joins a long list of public figures — most recently MK Avi Yehzekel (Labor), Olmert, and Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman — who have had charges against them thrown out by the courts.

"I don't want to harm the judicial system," Sheerit says, "but when dealing with public personalities — and a public figure's good name is the most important asset he has — there has to be a better balance."

"Public figures are punished the first day their names appear in the paper and it says that the police have begun investigating; ordinary citizens' punishment only begins if they are found guilty in court. The system needs to check over and over before it indicts a public figure."

Sheerit accuses the state attorney's office of being "trigger-happy" when it comes to public figures. It tries to make its life easier by indicting on police recommendations, in an effort to avoid having to explain to the press or the High Court why they haven't indicted.

But, Sheerit says, "letting the courts deal with something like this

"What do I need it for?" he asks. "It is a dying animal." Besides, he repeats, he feels ready for bigger and greener pastures — like the foreign ministry.

On the surface, Sheerit, considered one of Likud's leading doves, seems the last person Netanyahu would be interested in as foreign minister. Why, with his government constantly under attack from the Right, would the prime minister want to select for the high-profile ministry a moderate who did not vote against the Oslo accords, and who has said that he does not rule out the establishment of a Palestinian state?

"A moderate is exactly what Bibi needs," Sheerit says. "If he wants a spokesman who can show the world that the Likud is interested in peace, and that the negotiations are serious, then I am the answer. I have a good name in the world, and among the Arabs."

While Sheerit speaks, a daughter of elementary school age, one of his two children, comes to sit on a sofa for a few minutes to listen. A third child, Miri, died of cancer in 1993.

Her picture is featured prominently on a living room wall. Pointing at it, Sheerit says a ministerial position is not the most important thing in his life.

If Netanyahu is indeed considering Sheerit for the job David

Levy vacated in a bluff in January, there would be more than just a little irony involved. In 1993, Sheerit says, Netanyahu was in favor of expelling him. Ronni Milo and Assad Assad for bucking party discipline and abstaining in the Knesset vote on Oslo.

"In the last Knesset they wanted to throw me out of Likud because of Oslo. And look at me today, chairman of the coalition. More than that, Likud has gone ahead with Oslo," Sheerit says. "I said back then that it should."

"I said back then that if Likud does not support Oslo and the peace process, it has no chance of regaining power. They objected, objected and objected — until the elections, when all Likud surveys showed that I was 100 percent correct, and that the Likud had no chance if it didn't say it would continue with Oslo."

Three months before the election Bibi made his announcement that he would continue with the process.

Today, Sheerit says, he and Netanyahu see pretty much eye to eye on Oslo — something that should concern the coalition's right wing, since Sheerit has come out publicly in favor of the Likud backing a Palestinian state.

"I do not rule out the possibility of a Palestinian state," Sheerit says, repeating comments that caused a stir when first uttered in November.

"If the Palestinians hold up their end of the accords, I am not against it. My opinion is that if we sit and do nothing a Palestinian state will likely be established under the worst conditions for us. Better to come to an agreement with them under better terms for us."

Least the Palestinian leadership find too much comfort in Sheerit's words, he adds: "A state should not be taken for granted. They will have to give up on Jerusalem and agree on territorial compromise in Judea and Samaria, since we will not go back to the 1967 borders, agree to a buffer zone along the Jordan and to demilitarization," he says.

ACCORDING to Sheerit, who claims to be in contact with the Palestinian leadership, "Palestinian attitudes towards Netanyahu are changing. When they believed that Bibi would fall, they did not agree to move at all in the peace process — they are the ones responsible for stalling the talks. But now they even understand that Bibi is not going to fall. It is now impossible to topple him. Labor has given up, they are giving up, and their tone is changing."

Sheerit says that Palestinian acceptance of the American proposal of a 13-percent withdrawal is an indication that they are becoming more flexible.

"The accords will not fall over 10, 11, 12 or 13%. A percent here or there is not significant. The question is whether they will fulfill their obligations. Bibi has already said that if the Palestinians fulfill their obligations, no coalition will keep him from carrying out the second redeployment stage."

Sheerit does not take too seriously threats by the Land of Israel Front to topple the government if Netanyahu goes ahead with a double-digit second stage withdrawal.

"The Land of Israel Front can't do anything. We don't need their support. If the Palestinians reach an agreement with Bibi, there will be an absolute majority in the Knesset for it without the Right, because the Left will support it. So what will the Land of Israel Front do, topple Bibi?"

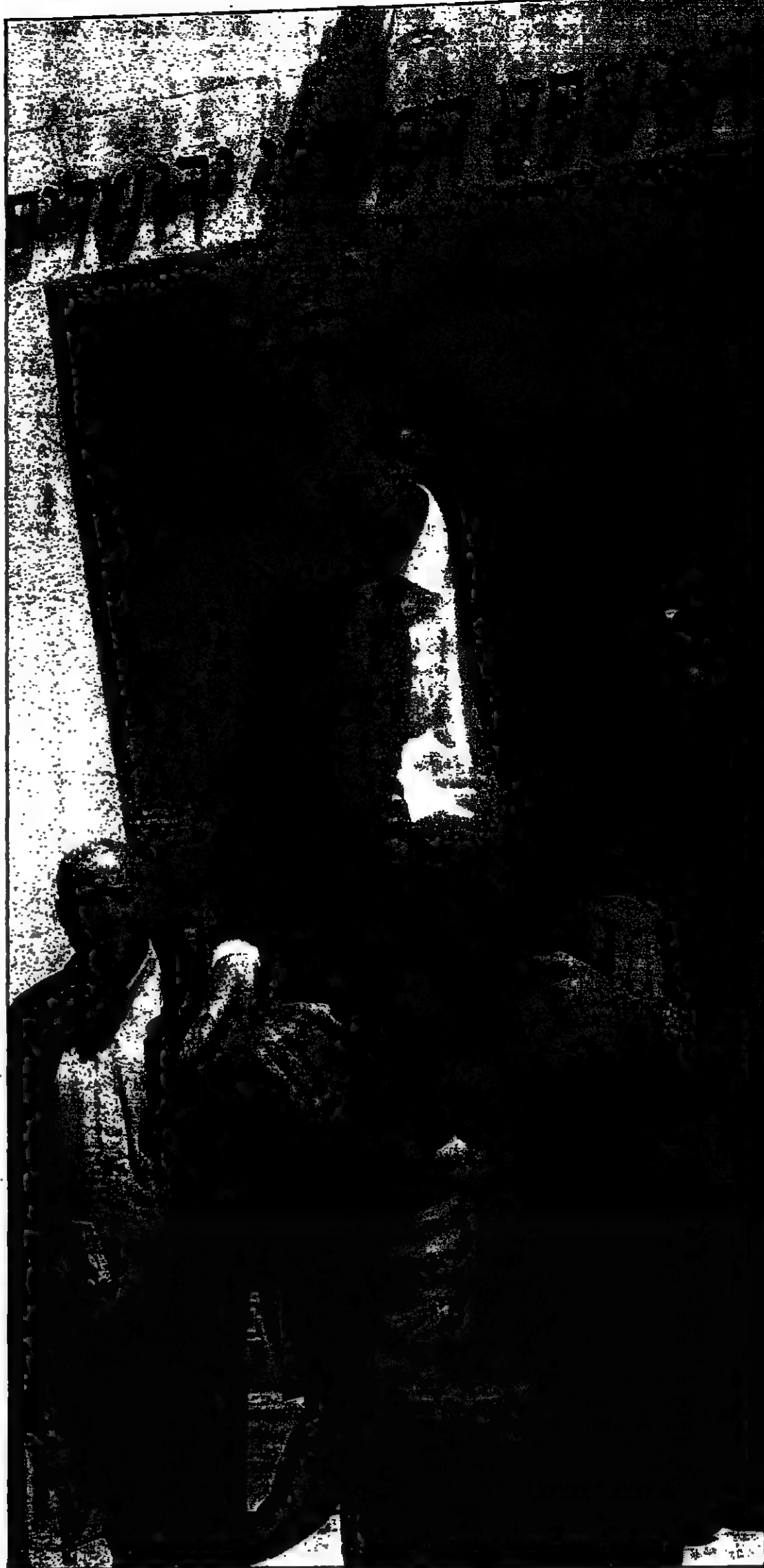
Sheerit is sure that the opposition will vote for any agreement with the Palestinians, although they may join a no-confidence motion presented by the Right a week or so later.

But in that case, he says, the government would not be collapsing because of a failure to make peace, but because it did make peace — in which case its stock in the public would only rise.

"If they topple us because we went ahead with the Palestinians, we would return to power with double the strength," he says.

Having said all that, and having excluded the complete and utter confidence that he knows how to project, Sheerit then says that it is time to push for a national unity government.

Why bring Labor and Ehud Barak onto center stage if he is so



Is he really head and shoulders above the rest of the Likud? Sheerit is triumphantly carried out of court following his acquittal last week.

(Ariel J. Rosenthal)

sure the government can fend off a coalition threat without them?

"If Labor went into a broad government with us the peace agreement would really have a national consensus," he replies. "An agreement will entail Israeli concessions, difficult decisions. The more we are able to face the Palestinians as a united front, the easier it will be to reach an agreement, because they won't be waiting for another alternative."

An additional benefit to a unity government, he says, is that it would neutralize the demands of small parties. Although he is reluctant to single out the haredi parties, it is clear that he has their demands very much in mind.

"If you look at the budget in many areas, you see that a lot of money went to areas that are not considered national objectives. All governments pay prices to the small parties. But with a national unity government, where you don't need the small parties, you can allocate those funds elsewhere, and set a new national policy agenda," Sheerit says.

While many point to the Peres-Shamir unity governments as failed enterprises, Sheerit says they achieved a lot.

"Look, they took the IDF out of Lebanon, brought down inflation from 400% to normal levels, and were able to enact a number of correct economic moves. Where

they didn't succeed was in personal relations."

Netanyahu and Barak would stand to have better luck at striking a good personal relationship than Shamir and Peres did, Sheerit says, because "they don't have the deep-seated animosity of the revisionist vs. the socialist camps. Both of them are my age — how much hatred can there be? Believe me, if there is an understanding on national unity, everything between them will be resolved quickly."

WHILE dreaming of a broad-based coalition and trying to pull some strings behind the scenes to bring it about, Sheerit is stuck heading what he says is the most difficult coalition ever assembled.

"You have built-in conflicts," he says. "What the haredi parties want contradicts what Yisrael Ba'aliya wants, and what the Third Way wants contradicts what the National Religious Party wants."

Nevertheless, he says, the coalition has hit a certain comfortable stride. "Bibi has learned over the last two years," Sheerit says. "There is no shame in admitting that, and he himself has said it."

"As a new prime minister, he didn't know how to run a government. All of a sudden he becomes prime minister and the world is on his back. He didn't know who was to his left, and who to his right."

"He didn't rely on people, was afraid to consult with them, and was dependent on a small group of people who, on more than one

occasion, gave him bad advice. "But he has learned from his mistakes. He consults more, hears more opinions before he decides, listens to more MKs and ministers."

Sheerit takes more than just a little credit for this, saying that since he became faction chairman last year, Netanyahu has held weekly meetings with Likud ministers and coalition party heads.

The meetings, he says, have enhanced coordination — something that was not at a premium during the first year of Netanyahu's tenure.

While eager to take credit for the improvement, Sheerit deflects blame for the defection of Geshet MKs from the coalition, even though they bolted under his watch.

"They were wrong, and they made a mistake," Sheerit says with complete certainty. "In the end we agreed to what they wanted, but they still decided to leave."

Paradoxically, according to Sheerit, the coalition is running more smoothly now, five seats smaller than when Geshet was a member.

"When the coalition became smaller, everybody understood that they had direct responsibility for the coalition's future. When there are a couple of people who create problems, it gives others the opportunity to create problems. But now if anyone makes a mess, the government will fall."

"Believe me, none of the parties wants to go to elections today, because none of them — none of them — is sure about how it would do at the polls."

Yad Vashem
The Holocaust Martyrs' and
Heroes' Remembrance Authority

**Ministry of Education,
Culture and Sport**
The Israel Information Center

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day 1998

PROGRAM OF EVENTS AT YAD VASHEM

The Eve of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day Wednesday April 22 1998

20:00	The opening ceremony of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, in the presence of President Ezer Weizman and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Warsaw Ghetto Square
22:00	"The State of Israel and the Holocaust" — symposium with Prof. Yisrael Gutman, journalist Dan Margalit, Prof. Avi Ravitzky and Prof. Amnon Rubinstein MK, Auditorium

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day Thursday April 23 1998

10:00	Siren
10:02	Wreath-laying ceremony with the participation of the President, government representatives, the Speaker of the Knesset, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency, the Chief of the General Staff, the Chief of Police, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the Mayor of Jerusalem, public figures, survivors' organizations, school children and delegations from all over the country, Warsaw Ghetto Square
10:30-12:30	"Unto Every Person There is a Name" — recitation of names of Holocaust victims by members of the public, Hall of Remembrance
10:30-16:00	Continuous screening of films on the Holocaust, Auditorium
13:00	Main memorial ceremony, Hall of Remembrance
17:30	Ceremony for youth movements and soldiers, in conjunction with the Israel Information Center, the Youth Authority, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, and the Youth Movement Council, in the presence of the Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Sport Moshe Peled MK, Warsaw Ghetto Square

Additional information
On Remembrance Day Eve, Wednesday April 22 1998, Yad Vashem will be open to the public from 08:00 until 13:00. At 17:30, invitees to the opening ceremony will be admitted to the site.
At 21:30, the public is invited to attend the symposium in the Auditorium.
On Remembrance Day, Thursday April 23 1998, Yad Vashem will be open to the public from 08:00 until 20:00. Private vehicles will not be admitted to Yad Vashem on Remembrance Day Eve or on Remembrance Day itself. Parking facilities are available on Mt. Herzl.
Transportation from Mt. Herzl to Yad Vashem will be available to the public for all Remembrance Day events. The public is invited to visit two exhibitions currently on display in the Art Museum:
"The Last Ghetto-Life in the Lodz Ghetto"
"No Child's Play: Children in the Holocaust — Creativity and Play"

No firearms allowed

All events are open to the public

Please bring your invitation to the opening ceremony. Invitations may be obtained from the Public Relations and Commemoration Department, Tel 02-6751614.

Limited seating available

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In a touching picture of brigade commander Yitzhak Rabin with Yigal Allon, Rabin holds his hand out as if modestly telling the photographer not to bother.

An extraordinary epoch

50

Fifty years after the Palmah Harel Brigade helped save the city of Jerusalem, the story of its men and women is retold in a photo exhibit that makes their courage and spirit come to life. Aryeh Dean Cohen tours it with writer Haim Hefer

refugee soldiers in Tel Aviv. Daily life mixed bravery with exhaustion. The commando unit fought mostly at night, but its members were always aware they might not return from the front.

Four hundred members of the brigade are buried at the Kiryat Anavim cemetery, where during the day soldiers and kibbutz members would estimate how many might fall that night, preparing graves in advance.

"I don't know any other army in the world where they did such a thing," Hefer says. "It was terrible. You knew it was a matter of life and death."

The soldiers played macabre games to pass the time, putting a napkin on top of a glass and a coin in the middle of the napkin. Each soldier then put his cigarette on the glass, and the one whose cigarette made the coin fall through thought, "I'm going to be next."

SLEEP WAS a welcome escape from the horrors of battle, as depicted in one photograph. It shows a soldier, his gun at his side, his boots in a corner and his face covered with a towel, trying to catch a few moments' rest.

Not even Ben-Gurion himself was more important than sleep. "One day they came back after a tough battle and they had this huge radio, and on the radio Rabin suddenly heard Ben-Gurion declaring the establishment of the State of Israel," Hefer recalled. "So he called to the boys and said: 'Listen, Ben-Gurion is making a speech proclaiming the establishment of the state of Israel.' One of the boys said: 'Shut off the radio, we want to sleep.'"

The exhibition includes photographs reflecting the unit's triumphs and tragedies: the victory at the monastery, the tragic massacre at Nebi Daniel, in which seven soldiers blew themselves up rather than surrender to Arabs who blocked the road from Gush Etzion to Bethlehem after the British confiscated soldiers' weapons; the struggle to free Ramat Rahel, and the fighting around the Old City.

There is an extensive segment on the Burma Road, created after a handful of Palmah officers decided one day to try to navigate a passage between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem that bypassed the cut-off asphalt road.

They shocked Ben-Gurion with their story when they arrived, thereby setting the road's construction, and the rescue of besieged Jerusalem, in motion.

There is a map made by the British, on which the route for the convoys to the capital is marked, and a timetable for the convoy to keep to along the 11 stations from Latrun to Ramat Rahel. Pictures of the "sandwich" and "butterfly" armored cars — the latter so called because of the wing-like openings at the top — which today pay homage to the brigade along the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway are also featured.

ONE MOVING photograph shows a group of bearded Bukharan Jews from Jerusalem, wearing peaked caps and carrying pickaxes and shovels over their shoulders as they show up to help work on the road that would be their salvation.

On the other side, Tel Aviv residents were recruited to carry bags of supplies over the rocky patches that had not yet been paved. "Many of them will tell you that was the proudest moment of their lives," Hefer said.

Original battle plans are also displayed, as is a lovely picture of commander Yitzhak Rabin and Yigal Allon. Rabin's palm is stretched out, as if modestly asking the photographer not to bother.



Pre-battle training: Four soldiers hold a rifle horizontally, enabling a fifth soldier to stand on and be pulled into an apartment building window above.



The women wanted to show they were as important as the men: Some, like this one, are shown on the wheels of jeeps, while others took part in highly dangerous field operations.

The couple in the picture stand defiantly in their makeshift mountain guard post, the woman's gun pointed straight at the enemy who is expected at any moment. They have practically no protection, no helmets, and no real uniforms.

Alone awaiting their fate, they appear tremendously vulnerable, yet calm in the face of battle as they stand side by side in the Judean Hills. They are part of what one of their comrades will later call "an epoch of heroism."

Fifty years after that moment was captured on film and half a century after Palmah Harel Brigade defenders like them helped save the city of Jerusalem, their story is being retold in the very capital that meant so much to them.

Liberating Jerusalem — Palmah — is a photograph exhibit at the House of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem, tells the story through pictures and documents, of the 1,600 members of the Harel Brigade, the first force to be conscripted in the War of Independence and summoned to the aid of the besieged capital.

It is a way for the city that owes them so much to say thanks — but also a mirror allowing us to see the individuals, spirit and courage of the Harel Brigade.

Viewing the exhibit is the best kind of history lesson, allowing visitors a more personal glimpse of events and figures they may only have read about. This reporter toured it recently with writer Haim Hefer, who led the unit's entertainment troupe — the first ever in the IDF — and provided the captions for the pictures. The photographs tell the story of a group of men and women who were both ordinary and extraordinary.

THE BRIGADE was established at the end of 1947 by the Palmah and put under the command of a young Yitzhak Rabin. One of its first assignments was to participate in the Nahshon Campaign in the spring of 1948, aimed at clearing the hills around Jerusalem of marauding Arabs who made it impossible for food, ammunition and arms to reach Jerusalem.

The situation there was terrible," Hefer recalled. "Most of the population, about 100,000 Jews, were desperate. They thought the end of the world was coming." Indeed, the pictures show just that.

In one, three young girls in pretty dresses try to look natural. One has her hands placed on her sister's shoulders as if to steady her nerves, as they stand in their courtyard piled high with sandbags.

In another, a woman puts a pacifier in a baby's mouth while her friend bounces a toddler on her lap as they sit in a sandbagged room. Water cisterns had run dry, as evidenced by pictures of Jerusalemites, Jews and Arabs walking on line with jerry cans for water to be delivered, despite threats of shelling.

They viewed the brigade members as their personal saviors, and Hefer remembers being showered with candy when his troupe arrived one day in Mahaneh Yehuda, even though these peo-

ple didn't even have sugar to put in their coffee."

Thrown into the fray to keep the roads open throughout the country, the Harel Brigade was poorly trained — if at all. One picture shows pre-battle training: four soldiers holding a rifle horizontally to support a fifth soldier, who could then be pulled by others above him into what looks like a Tel Aviv apartment building window.

"The training went on during the fighting," Hefer said. "The arms we had were the Czech rifles sent over as the last minute by ship. Then there was the Sten gun, which was more public relations than weapon."

It was a rag tag army, making do with what it had — few soldiers had matching uniforms, let alone hats. Even commanders in the pictures

"They left her with a hand grenade and a pair of scissors," Hefer recalled, "and she decided that if they were attacked she would first stab the wounded so as not to let them fall into enemy hands, then blow herself up with the hand grenade. Fortunately that wasn't necessary."

The women proved useful in other ways. British soldiers were too polite to bother searching them when they came through on convoys, so the women were able to hide parts of Sten guns in their clothes.

Many of the soldiers were refugees only recently arrived from abroad — like one very Polish-looking fellow posing among a group of five soldiers alongside a male piled high with jerry cans of water.

It was a rag tag army, making do with what it had — few soldiers had matching uniforms, let alone hats

wear differing gear, and certainly no epaulettes. They frowned on formality. When an American shipment of baseball-style hats arrived, they were derisively called *hatsmakers*, or *hatsmakers*, and were scorned by most of the soldiers, Hefer said.

THEY WERE a curious mixture of men and women, sabra and refugee. The women played a tremendous role in the brigade, explained Hefer, who still refers to his former comrades as "boys" and "girls."

"Most of the girls wanted equality, and they fought," he said. "They wanted to show that they weren't any less important or less fighters than the men. When I joined the unit, we had two companies of men and one of women."

The women certainly stand out in the photographs: One poses alongside a man, two hand grenades in her belt, proudly gripping a Sten gun. "She could throw a grenade 25 meters," Hefer said.

Some of the women are shown at the wheels of jeeps — like Rabin's personal driver, who could swear with the best of them, Hefer said. Others participated in the most dangerous field operations, despite occasional opposition from home.

"One woman from a Sephardi background told me her parents didn't talk to her for a year after she joined up," Hefer recalled.

Their bravery was displayed daily. Hefer recalled one woman, now a botanist at Kibbutz Kabri, wounded at Nebi Samwil in an aborted morning raid.

"It took two hours until they found her. She asked the paramedics not to take off her pants because the blood had already coagulated. Some boy took her out of the battle zone, and she said: 'Leave me, otherwise they will kill you too.' She was saved, as was another woman left to defend a group of wounded soldiers in Bab el-Wad after another operation."

"Many of them were [Holocaust] survivors," Hefer said. "You could have a platoon commander who had fought with the partisans in the forests of Lithuania. That was the first time they felt they were equal to the sabras. One time they would save a sabra, another time a sabra would save them. The war brought them together."

BUT THEIR Holocaust experiences could make their Harel experiences more difficult.

The exhibit includes a picture of a mournful-looking soldier just hours after a difficult battle for the San Simon Monastery — one of many battles the brigade fought in or around Jerusalem in 1948 — where there were many wounded.

"They put them down in the cellar on mattresses," Hefer remembered, "and when they thought they would have to retreat from the monastery, commander Uri Ben-Ari called over a paramedic and said: 'Find out which of the wounded can walk, and which can't. We'll put explosives under those who can't walk.'"

"The boy made the choice, and later, when we won the battle, and didn't have to blow them up, he came to Ben-Ari and said: 'I am one who survived the selection in Auschwitz, and I had to do the selection again.'"

"It was a terrible choice for him, because he remembered."

Try as they might, however, the refugees were not always successful in blending in, much like the Nikolai Rappaports of today's IDF.

Hefer recalled how he referred to his unit as "the elite."

"What elite?" asked a refugee comrade, who wrote to him explaining how when packages from the Joint Distribution Committee were distributed to the soldiers, all he ended up with was a writing tablet — but he had no one to write to. Hefer subsequently helped establish centers for

Most of the pictures came from Palmah archives or from Yehuda Tabenkin, curator Nissan Perez explained, and most are on show for the first time. The exhibition is being mounted to mark the nation's 50th anniversary, at the initiative of the Association of Palmah Veterans, and in cooperation with the municipality's culture department. It will run until May 15, the anniversary of the founding of the Palmah, which museum officials say will be managed by a group of volunteers.

Hefer said he hopes visitors, especially younger ones, will grasp that something important happened. They'll see what the

atmosphere was like at the time and want to know more."

He said the army's not the same today; there's less motivation except among soldiers in Lebanon. There's also something missing in Israeli society today, something that made the Harel Brigade's efforts possible, Hefer added.

The veteran songwriter, a witness to what he calls "the best of days and the worst of days," finds the answer in the songs of the time periods.

"In the time of the Palmah," he said, "the songs were all about 'we.' Now the songs are about 'I.' That's the whole story."

The hidden persuaders

The Irish peace process blew into the Sheraton Hotel in New York on a chilly April breeze six years ago, and nobody noticed.

The presidential hopeful from Arkansas, governor Bill Clinton, was persuaded to spare a few minutes for a small group of Irish Americans, mainly because his rival in the Democratic primaries, Jerry Brown, had agreed to turn up.

In presidential primaries, he even rejects an invitation that has even a hint of seriousness, if it comes from the Jews or the Irish of New York.

It was Clinton the Irish really wanted — Brown was a decoy. Clinton was on a losing streak in early '92, but the word was out in the Irish community that this unlikely hick from Arkansas was serious business on ethnic issues and already had the Jewish community in the bag. They wanted him on the record about Ireland at an early stage, just in case.

They got more than they expected from that brief Sheraton appearance — a scene brilliantly documented in *The Greening of the White House*, by Conor O'Clery (Gill & Macmillan, 1996). They got a promise from Clinton that if he made it to the White House, he would send a special peace envoy to Northern Ireland.

"I think we have been too reluctant to engage ourselves in a positive way because of our longstanding special relationship with Britain," Clinton explained. It might have been taken as a mild bit of electioneering blarney. It wasn't — Clinton was no Dan Quayle, he really knew his Irish potatoes. When he was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, he had taken a keen interest in the 1968 outbreak of "the troubles" — the civil rights campaign by Catholics in Northern Ireland which led to all-out sectarian warfare. He had even crossed over to Dublin for a week-end visiting the famous pubs.

CLINTON knew exactly what it meant to slip a thin wedge into the cast-iron British policy that declared Northern Ireland to be an internal and domestic problem.

The furious British Conservative government of John Major was later to make the silly mistake of allowing party advisers to work for Clinton's Republican opponents. The advisers suggested using a poster of Jennifer Flowers with the caption "and now he wants to screw the whole country."

Some brilliant Irish and Irish-American diplomacy lies behind the historic agreement over Northern Ireland. Thomas O'Dwyer traces its steps



Last Friday in the Oval Office, after nurturing peace talks in Northern Ireland through the night from afar, President Clinton praised the accord as "the best chance for peace in a generation." (AP)

Wrong answer! Paul O'Dwyer, the curmudgeonly and aged guru of the New York Irish, growled that in the 70 years since he had left County Mayo he had never heard a politician who knew more about Ireland than Bill Clinton. It was the equivalent of an Irish canonization for the Democrat from Arkansas.

The Irish wheeler-dealers moved into action in the media and on the campaign and diplomatic trails. Tipperary-born Niall O'Dowd, a cheery raconteur and founder-publisher of the feisty New York Irish Voice and Irish America magazines, was seeking ways to get the American political process seriously engaged in the Northern Ireland problem.

Looking back, I am reminded of my first meeting with then-candi-

date Bill Clinton in 1991 in a New York hotel room long before he was a front runner for the presidency," wrote O'Dowd in an *Irish Times* column this week. "We had been searching for a presidential candidate for many years who would take the issue of Northern Ireland seriously. We had more hope than expectation that the obscure Southern governor would care an Arkansas catfish for our concerns. "We could not have been more wrong. Clinton met us alone and blew us away with his Irish knowledge," wrote O'Dowd. "Paul O'Dwyer turned to me as we left the room. 'If this guy gets elected everyone better watch out,' he said. Those were prophetic words."

WITH A pre-a-porter supply of

green ties and obscure Irish grandmothers, American presidential candidates have always viewed Irish Americans as ballot fodder — their passionate love of the old homeland an easy prey for glib tongues and political seduction.

The morning after, it was always different. Elected presidents soon abandoned Irish charms to go home to that British "special relationship," and the younger New York and Boston Irish were thoroughly sick of the Reagan-Thatcher and Bush-Major duets.

American policy-makers, weaned on the Cold War, like things simple. The bottom line on Ireland always was — some of our best ancestors were Irish. Northern Ireland is a pain in the butt, and we're agin' terrorism. No one, including the government in Dublin, would disagree.

Publisher O'Dowd was already teamed up with a friend in the Irish embassy in Washington — one Brendan Scannell (now serving as Ireland's first resident ambassador in Israel) who had many friends in the US Congress. Scannell apparently shared O'Dowd's reckoning that the Bush administration was a lost cause on Ireland and that the Clinton bandwagon was the way to go.

After discussions with O'Dowd, Clinton's ethnic affairs campaign organizer Chris Hyland helped set up the Irish Americans for Clinton peace lobby, chaired by former Congressman Bruce Morrison.

It was an amazingly simple idea copied from other ethnic-Americans for Clinton groups already in place. As such, it became the natural address for what was virtually the Clinton manifesto on Northern Ireland, which the candidate put in a letter only two weeks before the '92 election.

The letter was drafted on Clinton's orders by another key

Irish lobbyist, Nancy Soderberg, a former aide to Senator Edward Kennedy. That letter went further than any president had ever dared go on Northern Ireland.

With hindsight, the Clinton policy statement was a brilliant blueprint for what happened in Belfast this week under the chairmanship of former US Senator George Mitchell. As cited in O'Clery's book, Clinton wrote: "A permanent and peaceful solution to the crisis in Northern Ireland can only be achieved if the underlying cause of the strife and instability is dealt with vigorously, fairly and within a time frame that guarantees genuine, substantial and steady progress... I believe the appointment of a special US envoy to Northern Ireland could be a catalyst in the effort to secure a lasting peace."

He went on to slam the British government for not vigorously opposing job discrimination against Catholics, for "wanton use of lethal force" and "collusion between security forces and Protestant paramilitary groups."

The statement was a breath-stopper. It made traditional Irish Americans like Edward Kennedy gasp that it was counter-productive and would enrage London. That was putting it mildly.

The British Conservative advisers followed up their crude campaign advice to Republicans by delving into Clinton's student passport files in Britain looking for dirt to harm him — such as a rumored trip to Moscow.

But campaigning is one thing — ruling is another. After Clinton was elected and settled into office and more pressing controversies, members of the activist Irish camp became alarmed, thinking that they were about to fall victim once again to the use-them-and-lose-them rule of politicians and ethnic groups.

They need not have worried. There was a long and anguishing road ahead — an international row over the granting of a US visa to Gerry Adams, leader of the IRA's political wing, Sinn Féin; IRA cease-fires made and broken; the bungling of John Major.

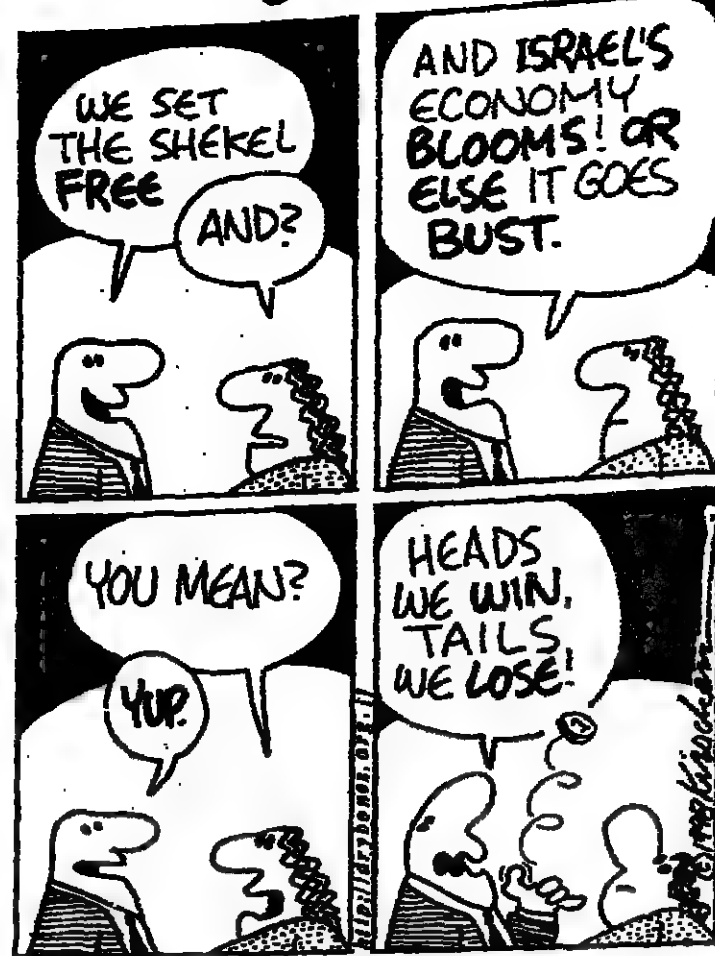
Finally, came the arrival on the scene of Prime Minister Tony Blair and this year's great leap forward in the peace negotiations which delivered last Easter Saturday's signed agreement. But the groundswell had been there for nearly a whole year amid widespread rumors of his alleged romantic liaison with Israel's former consul-general to New York, Colette Avital. Gossip-mongers also contended that Peres had left his wife, Sonia, to whom he has been married for over 30 years, in order to take up residence with Avital, and there were veiled hints in the media about a well-protected public figure whose home is no longer guarded. Even then Peres said nothing, reportedly because his wife didn't want him to.

But, as *Yedioth Aharonot* reported on Monday, matters came to a head when someone asked Peres's daughter whether Avital was pregnant with his child. This week Peres appeared on television's Channel 2 to declare that there was as much truth in the rumor that he had left his wife as there had been in an earlier rumor that his mother was an Arab.

Ironically, Sonia and Shimon Peres were dining at the home of *Yedioth Aharonot* social columnist Mira Avrech when she received a telephone call from a mutual acquaintance, who wanted her to confirm that Peres had left his wife. Avrech, who has been a close friend of the Peres family for some four decades, told the caller that the story was untrue and that Peres and his wife were at the moment sitting at her dining room table. The caller was incredulous and dissatisfied. It was, it seemed, too juicy a morsel to quash. Peres said on TV that the gossip emanated from "a high place," but declined to elaborate.

See **HIDDEN**, Page 22

Dry Bones



GRAPVINE By GREER FAY CASHMAN



A smiling Leah Rabin on her 70th with Tel Aviv Hilton manager Ronald van Weezel.

A frequent victim of the rumor mill, former prime minister Shimon Peres has usually chosen silence over comment on unfavorable gossip. And until this week he stayed silent for nearly a whole year amid widespread rumors of his alleged romantic liaison with Israel's former consul-general to New York, Colette Avital. Gossip-mongers also contended that Peres had left his wife, Sonia, to whom he has been married for over 30 years, in order to take up residence with Avital, and there were veiled hints in the media about a well-protected public figure whose home is no longer guarded. Even then Peres said nothing, reportedly because his wife didn't want him to.

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promoted Yavin to head ITV.

WHAT a coincidence. When retired Swiss swimming pool manufacturer Ulrich Hartmann and his wife Marie came to Israel for a four-day visit, they went to see the picnic and look-out site at Mitze Betar on the outskirts of Jerusalem which Hartmann's company had established in honor of his son Dr. Heinz Hartmann. They were somewhat appalled by the state of neglect and the disappearance of a bronze map of the area. While they were resting on one of the benches, they were befriended by a group of picnicers from Jerusalem — Chana and Jonathan Sheink, Pessy and Neville Krausz, Blossom and Shlomo Rothblum and Carole and Gay Golding, who invited the Hartmanns to join them for lunch. The Hartmanns said they had been trying to get hold of the Jewish National Fund's representative for Switzerland, but without result. As it happened, they didn't have far to look. The map lives in the same building as Pessy and Neville Krausz, who promised to deliver the message.

HER much-publicized 70th birthday party at the Savoy home of Hila and Ran Rahav was not the only event to mark Leah Rabin's seventh decade. Her birthday was also celebrated in conjunction with the screening of the Dutch documentary film *Warrior - Peace Maker - Yitzhak Rabin*, after which she was invited to a festive gathering at the Tel Aviv Hilton. In addition to a sumptuous birthday cake, hotel resident manager Ronald van Weezel presented Rabin with a set of silver wine accessories for Pessah.

WHAT'S the worst thing that can happen to you on the eve of a major event? Michelle Mazel, the wife of Israel's ambassador to Egypt, had invited 125 guests to the Seder when her cook fell ill. Because of the stringent security around the ambassador's residence it was impossible to get a swift replacement, so Mazel, with the help of an American friend from Brooklyn, had no choice but to make the matza balls herself — 400 in total. "I never want to see another *insidel*," she said afterwards.

IS Haim Yavin coming back to anchor the *Mabat* news on Channel 1? If Uri Porat, who next week takes up his post as director-general of the Broadcasting Authority, has his way, Yavin will return to his familiar stomping ground. Porat intends to make some sweeping personnel changes at ITV and has already tried to lure Yavin to rejoin Channel 1 — but whether Yavin is willing, and whether he can break free from his current contractual arrangement to a Channel 2 franchisee, is another ball game altogether. It was Porat, by the way, who during his previous stint as IBA director-general

THE Shlomo Carlebach marathon memorial concert started late, but by around 10 p.m. attendance had swelled to a couple of thousand. Carlebach's younger daughter Dafi made two stage appearances to share some of her father's Torah with his fans, and Rabbi Yankele Shamas, a veteran Carlebach disciple, announced the establishment of a Shlomo Carlebach Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Another Carlebach veteran, Benzion Solomon, singer and string instrumentalist, performed together with several of his sons, including Yehuda Solomon, lead singer with the Moshav Band, which has just completed a highly successful tour of the US and Canada.

WHEN Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert toured *The Jerusalem Post* Handicrafts Fair, he was waylaid by residents who wanted to shake his hand and wish him a happy holiday. But one person persisted in complaining about high rates and taxes, to which Olmert retorted: "Tel Aviv is much higher. Haifa is much higher. I'm not in the business of getting popular at any cost." An intriguing admission in an election year.

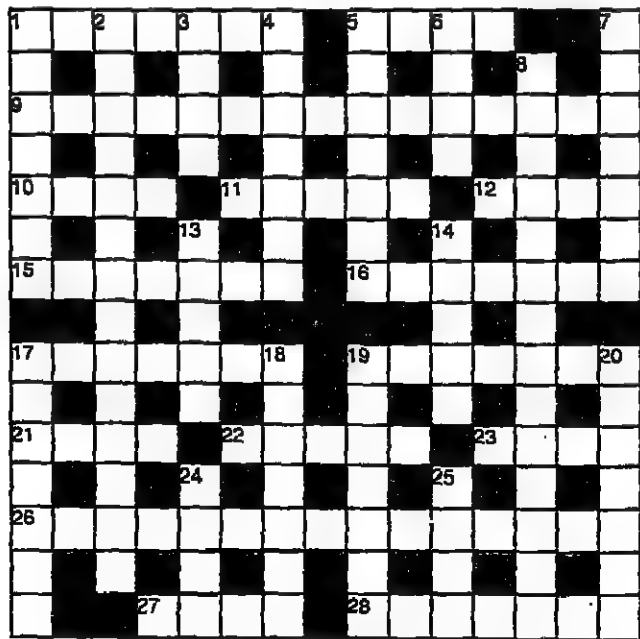
CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Calendar a Latin graduate can read back to front (7)
 - Manage to acquire a clerical cloak (4)
 - Indisposed to find where the forecast is (5,3,7)
 - Blast! There's a mead in the cloth (4)
 - Fish makes a monk sick (5)
 - Short distance from fashionable church (4)
 - Annoyed because officers went first (7)
 - Words added later transform religious manual (7)
 - Barge encircles steamer named "The Falcon" (7)
 - Frenchman and I tucked into meat from Flanders (7)
 - Vestment returned by archbishop of York (4)

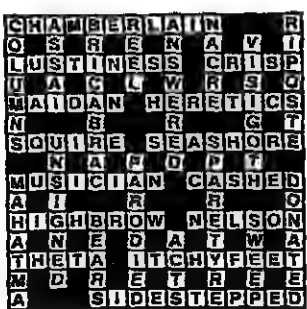
- Reference some readers find extremely useful (5)
- Opposed to displaying silver at home (4)
- Leaving full-time education? Clearly not! (9,6)
- Ship furnished with second rate equipment (4)
- Paid for others to be given medication (7)

DOWN

- A day the German went to pieces? (7)
- Went one better and drew perfect circles (4,5,5)
- Average number joining the Marines (4)
- Placing female in mixed school was consistent (7)

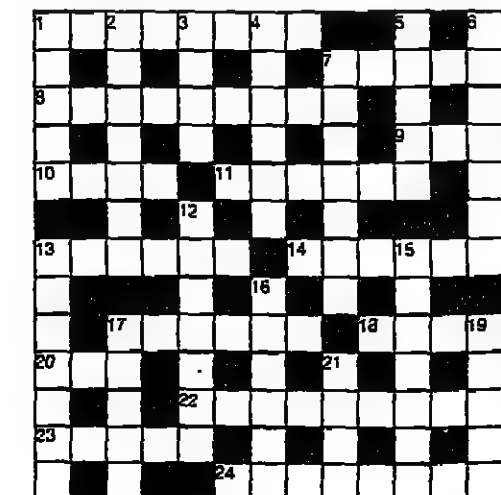


SOLUTIONS



Yesterday's Quick Solution
ACROSS: 1 Pester, 2 Sighed, 7 Drivelled, 9 Lory, 10 Lion, 11 Maine, 13 Bunnet, 14 Bonnet, 15 School, 17 Bonnet, 19 Coyly, 20 Lint, 22 Oid, 23 Greengage, 24 Bun, 27 Tightly, 28 Tightly.
DOWN: 1 Pedler, 2 Tory, 3 Reveal, 4 Seilae, 5 Gael, 6 Diradi, 7 Drenching, 8 Dismantle, 11 Medoc, 12 Enjoy, 15 Sellar, 16 Lively, 17 Bright, 18 Tightly, 21 Tied, 22 Oppa.

QUICK CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Cooking slowly (8)
 - Wager (5)
 - Adora (9)
 - Chopping tool (3)
 - Cupola (4)
 - Egyptian peasant (6)
 - Various (6)
 - Two-headed muscle (6)
 - Recollection (6)
 - Maple (4)
 - Low (3)
 - Science of universe (9)
 - Unpleasant (5)
 - Relating to trees (8)

- DOWN**
- Procreate (5)
 - Egg-white (7)
 - Queen's Counsel (4)
 - Secured with brad (6)
 - Indian prince (5)
 - Retribution (7)
 - Sheepdog (7)
 - Pre-eminence (7)
 - Staying power (7)
 - Shut in (7)
 - Rubber (6)
 - Dampish (5)
 - Regal (5)
 - Lombardie lake (4)

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- Machshavot Mazon
- Beersheba
- Tal-Sai
- (Hakniya Hashotelet)



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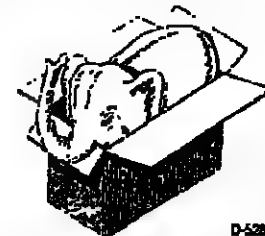
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HIGH-TECH SALES AND MARKETING	Apr. 21	Apr. 20
WINDOWS NT MCSE Express Track (6 courses)	Apr. 27	June 16
WINDOWS NT MCSE Regular Track (6 courses)	Oct. 5	May 28
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JAVA, VISUAL J++ Programmers	N/A	Mar. 22
JAVA, VISUAL J++ Non Programmers	N/A	June 21
C/C++ PROGRAMMING (Evening Sessions)	N/A	Mar. 16
C/C++ PROGRAMMING (Evening Sessions)	Apr. 28	May 4
VISUAL C++	Apr. 28	Apr. 27
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GENERAL ASSISTANCE

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Thursday, April 16
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Tel Aviv: Bass, 66 Frishman, 523-7826; Benl, 174 Dinsgoff, 522-2388; Tib 1 a.m. Friday: Jacobowitz, 125 Ibn Qviat, 546-2040; Tib midnigh Superpharm Ramat Aviv, 40 Einstein, 641-3730; Superpharm London Ministors, 4 Shaul Hamelech, 606-0115.
Ra'anana-Kfar Sava: Hadar, 12 Habanim, Hod Hasharon, 740-1435.
Netanya: Hamaar, 86 Weizman, 882-9389; Halkit: Derech Hayam, 200 Derech Hayam, 837-1472.
Krayot area: Deganyeh, 19 Boasal, Krayot Haim, 841-2371.
Herzliya: Clal Pharm, Beit Merkazim, 6 Maskit (cnr. Sderot Hagalim), Herzliya Pituach, 955-8472, 955-8407. Open 9 a.m. to midnight.
Upper Nazareth: Clal Pharm, Lev Ha'ir Mail, 657-0468. Open 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

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Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Medical Center Dana Pediatric Hospital (pediatrics); Tel Aviv Medical Center (surgery).
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Saturday, April 18
Jerusalem: (day) Jafra Gate, Jafra Gate, Old City, 628-9888; (evening) Superpharm, 3 Haheladut, 624-6244; (day and evening) Baisam, Saleh e-Din, 627-2315; Shualat, Shualat Road, 581-0108; Dar Aldawa, Herod's Gate, 628-2058; Tel Aviv: (day and evening) Baisam, 28 King George, 528-3731; Baluch, 32 Baluch, 522-6425. Tib midnigh: Superpharm Ramat Aviv, 40 Einstein, Ramat Aviv, 641-3730; Superpharm London Ministors, 4 Shaul Hamelech, 606-0115.
Ra'anana-Kfar Sava: (day) Narkis, 8 Haheladut, 748-5537; (evening) Hagal Hayarok, 8 Haheladut, 748-5537.
Netanya: Hadarim Mall, 2 Hacadar, 862-8436.
Haifa: Kikar Ziv, 1 Shalom Aleichem, 823-5084.
Krayot area: Superpharm, Hakiryon, 44 Hakiryon, Krayot Haim, 877-9320.
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IRAN

Continued from Page 1

The congressional statements followed a series of Jerusalem Post articles that quoted Iranian government documents as saying the Islamic republic obtained two nuclear weapons in January 1992 from the former Soviet Union. At the time, the memos said, the weapons were inoperable.

Rep. Jim Saxton and Rep. Bill McCollum told the Post they have taken seriously reports that Iran has achieved nuclear capability.

"I have followed this very closely over the years and only a fool would assume that Tehran has the best of intentions," said Saxton, a New Jersey Republican and chairman of the House Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare. "I believe that Iran already has nuclear weapons and that our policy should reflect that."

McCullum, a Florida Republican and a member of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, went further. A former member of the Terrorism Task Force, he said that the evidence acquired by the group "indicates that Iran possesses nuclear capability. For years, we have received reliable information that Iran has been obtaining nuclear weapons' parts and supplies from the former Soviet republics in Central Asia. Not only have we not dismissed these reports, but over these six years there has been a growing volume of supporting evidence."

Labor MK Rafi Eini, who obtained the Iranian government memorandums on the arrival of nuclear weapons to Tehran in Washington and relayed them to Israel, said the US and Israel have known of these documents since 1995.

For his part, McCollum said Tehran's policy suggests that it already has nuclear weapons and is now trying to acquire a delivery system to launch them.

"We have witnessed various activities in Iran — such as the acquisition of ballistic missiles and the establishment and exercising of a distinct national-level command and control system dedicated for the launching of strategic weapons — that reinforce the wealth of data on Iranian nuclear weapons acquisition," McCollum said. "Therefore, I believe that prudence dictates that US policy toward Tehran must be based on the fact that Iran has already crossed the nuclear threshold."

A US analyst with connections in the US intelligence community said he was told by senior intelligence officials they are convinced Tehran has a small-sized nuclear weapon — although Washington has been unable to locate it.

State of uncertainty

The steep devaluation of the shekel continues to make headlines. The press finds fault with the government and the Bank of Israel for their handling of the currency liberalization.

"There are a few good reasons to support the claim that the planned liberalization will end in national weeping," Yehor Aharonov's Gidon Eshet states, adding that by keeping the public in the dark about the plan's details, the government only encourages additional nervousness.

Ma'ariv's Moshe Perl claims that both the businessmen and the ordinary citizens do not trust the decisionmakers in Jerusalem and have no idea if they actually know what they are doing.

Yehor's Sever Plotzker offers more reassuring forecasts. He relies on models from different countries and concludes that the liberalization will cause Israelis to

abandon the view that the dollar is sacred and "the shekel will reign."

Hebron celebrations

Yuval Sherlo, writing in Ma'ariv, supports conducting jubilee celebrations in Hebron. He insists that the celebration is not a political manipulation but a great privilege for the state as the city is "the cradle of the Israeli Kingdom of the days of the Bible."

"If the celebrations will lead the public to embrace Hebron as an integral part of the state and if Hebron's population will treat Israel and its establishments [with respect], it would be one of the most wonderful outcomes of the jubilee events," he writes.

Haim Hanegbi, also writing in Ma'ariv, disagrees. He refers to Sunday's celebrations marking 30 years since Rabbi Moshe Levinger established a settlement in Hebron and accuses the settlers of spreading hatred and of incitement. He

states that it is tragic "to watch an entire state being led by the nose of one man, Moshe Levinger, and to think that millions of people, Jews and Arabs alike, might pay the price of his hallucinations with their bodies and their souls."

Cutting slack

The press evaluated last week-end's positive articles and commentaries on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In Yehor, Emma Alon questions reporters' surprise at Netanyahu's successes. "Whoever undermines Netanyahu's basic ability to function as a good prime minister, undermines the majority of the Israeli public's ability to vote for a good prime minister," she writes, adding that if the majority voted for him, it must know the reason why.

Ha'aretz's Yoel Marcus says that Netanyahu's high opinion of himself helps him succeed in interviews.

RELEASED

Continued from Page 1

Katamesh's brother, Rebbi, was released a week ago and Palestinian sources said another two will be released within the next few days. All have pledged not to carry out or encourage violence against Israel — after years of refusal.

Television news broadcasts showed Katamesh taking the pledge of non-violence that reportedly had secured his release from Daman prison in northern Israel.

"My colleagues and I will not undertake any acts that affect the security of the Israeli public, directly or indirectly," Katamesh was shown saying to military authorities.

Israeli security sources said such a pledge has symbolic importance as the Popular Front waged a campaign against the Israeli-Palestinian agreements. The group is not considered active as most of the violent opposition to Israel has been

assumed by Islamic militants. Katamesh initially refused to answer questions of reporters, saying he was tired. But hours later he held a news conference in Ramallah in which he vowed "that the struggle will continue until the end of the Israeli occupation."

Katamesh denied he was a member of the Popular Front and that he has reversed his opposition toward the Oslo Accords, but said he will now study the political situation.

More than 200 administrative detainees are still being held by Israel.

Jay Bushinsky adds: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's communications director, David Bar-Ilan, said Katamesh and four other PFLP activists just released or due to be released "signed declarations that they will shun terrorism and will not resort to violence."

Bar-Ilan said they promised to continue their activity only on the political level. "This is a confidence-building measure as far as

we are concerned," he said. "We hope they will stick to their words."

Bar-Ilan said the PFLP cadres receive their orders from George Habash, who is abroad.

News agencies add: The Terror Victims Association headed by Meir Indor was enraged by Katamesh's release.

"The left-wing Jewish groups who energetically worked for his release will pay the bill for the attacks that Katamesh will carry out in the future," it said in a statement.

Left-wing and human-rights activists praised the government's decision to free Katamesh.

"The Israeli government has now seen the proof that administrative detention does not work," said Meretz MK Dedi Zucker. "This should open the doors for others."

Meanwhile, Hamas published a leaflet last night in Gaza claiming it does not trust the PA's investigation of the killing of Muhi Sharif. The group, however, is willing to participate in any probe conducted by an independent Arab committee.

INFLATION

Continued from Page 1

The shekel's depreciation this month came amid uncertainty over the nature, effect, and timetable of the government's currency liberalization package, which is officially scheduled to be launched on Independence Day.

Elsewhere, there were seasonal

reductions in prices of fruits and vegetables (-0.5%), as well as clothing and footwear (-2.8%).

The largest price rises last month were in education, culture, and entertainment (0.5%), followed by health (0.4%).

Critics of the Bank of Israel's low-inflation policy attacked the central bank following the release of the monthly inflation data.

"This is an index of social failure," said MK Maxim Levy (Geshet), who chairs the Knesset Labor and Social Affairs Committee and is a candidate in the upcoming elections for chairmanship of the Histadrut.

Manufacturers Association president Dan Propoy said that behind an admittedly positive CPI situation lurks less favorable data, which add up to a recession.

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\$100 Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Chazanas, Los Angeles, CA, Mr. Sheldon Blank, Winnipeg, Canada.
Bernard Friedman, Yonkers, NY. Anon, Beersheba.

\$80, 5 x Chai - In honor of the IDF soldiers, whose whereabouts are unknown - Eugene and Dorita Gottlieb, San Diego, CA.

\$50 In loving memory of our parents, Moe and Mina Katz and Rabbi Isaac and Henriette Klein - Honey and Paul Katz, Ma'aleh Adumim.

\$36 Mazal tov to Edwin Baker, on your 88th Pessah birthday - keep them coming hale and hearty - Pauline Weinman.

\$30 In honor of the birthday of Edward Samuel - Tim Beckwith, San Luis Obispo, CA.
\$25 E.W. and Helen Woodham, Newport, AR. In memory of our dear friend, Leon Lewis, NY.
NIS 180 Mrs. F. Roman, Raleigh, CA. Grant Newton, Sylva, NC.
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Progress NIS 3,996
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NIS 200 Shmuel and Doreen Brodeur, Herzliya.
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NIS 50 Clara Lagnado, J'm. Meir Shitler, Tel Aviv.

NIS 15 Eva Berkson, Netanya.
NIS 83 Tzedaka money collected by the children of Rachel's Kindergarten class at Temple Israel in Boston, MA.
NIS 15 R. Asper, Winnipeg, Canada.
\$200 From the Jewish Christian Community, Halstead, England.

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Progress NIS 1,649
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WELCOME HOME FUND

NIS 200 Doreen and Shmuel Brodeur, Herzliya.
NIS 150 Ohad, Guy, Shira, Inbal and Gil.

NIS 15 Eva Berkson, Netanya.
NIS 73 Gethsemane Baptist Church, Springfield, GA.
NIS 100 Anon., Beersheba.
NIS 50 Anon.

NIS 35 S.A. Vaughn, Phoenix, AZ.
NIS 15 R. Asper, Winnipeg, Canada.
NIS 35
NIS 16,911
NIS 59,076.74
(other currencies converted to shekels)

Ottawa clinches playoff berth

MIAMI (AP) — Alexei Yashin and Andreas Dackell each had a goal and an assist as Ottawa clinched its second playoff berth in as many years with a 3-2 victory over Florida on Tuesday.

The Panthers scored a pair of goals in the last 3:24 to make it close, but could not get the tying goal.

Coyotes 2, Red Wings 1
Brad Bristner scored one goal and assisted on the second as host Phoenix came from behind to snap Detroit's six-game winning streak.

The Coyotes, who won their third in a row to open a four-point lead over Edmonton in the race for the sixth playoff spot in the Western Conference, may open the postseason against the Red Wings.

Detroit stayed two points behind the Dallas in the race for the Central Division title with two games remaining, and would be the

third seed if it failed to pass the Stars.

Capitals 3, Rangers 1
Andrei Nikolishin scored the winning goal with his nose, boosting host Washington's bid for home-ice advantage in the playoffs.

N.Y. Rangers 1, 0, 0-1
Washington 19
First Period—1, New York, Sundstrom 19
Second, 2, Washington, Bonds 46
(Korostukhin, Nikolishin), 12:47. Second
Period—None. Third Period—3, Washington,
Nikolishin 6, 8:23 (pp), 4, Washington, Jensen 9
(Housley, Baumgartner), 8:10 (pp). Goals—New
York, Olausen, Washington, Kozlov, A—19, 7:40.

Ottawa 3, 2, 0-3
First Period—1, Ottawa, Yashin 33 (Dackell),
1:52. 2, Ottawa, Zlotok 10 (McEachern), 15:03
(pp). Second Period—3, Ottawa, Dackell 15
(Dackell, 4:18, Third Period—4, Florida, Kozlov 18
(Dvorak, Vasylovskiy), 16:36 (pp), 5, Florida,
Mellenty 15 (Whitney, Jovanovski), 18:36.
Goals—Ottawa, Dackell, Florida, Vasylovskiy, A—14, 7:03.

Detroit 2, 0, 0-2
First Period—None. Second
Period—2, Detroit, 10:36 (Petrov), 6:15, Third Period—
2, Phoenix, Bristner 9 (Verdon, Jensen),
3:31, 5, Phoenix, Olausen 5 (Jensen, Jensen), 14:52.
Goals—Detroit, Olausen, Phoenix, Waisa, A—
16, 11:10.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Rangers	47	22	10	104	218	159
Philadelphia	41	27	11	93	233	186
Washington	38	30	12	86	214	197
N.Y. Islanders	28	40	11	67	204	228
N.Y. Rangers	23	39	10	64	191	228
Florida	24	42	14	62	196	247
Tampa Bay	17	53	9	43	146	254

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	47	21	11	105	234	162
Edmonton	44	21	15	103	246	189
St. Louis	42	29	8	92	239	194
Phoenix	34	32	10	78	227	220
Chicago	30	37	12	72	188	192
Toronto	28	42	9	65	186	230

Pacific Division

Pacific Division	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Los Angeles	37	26	17	91	223	201
San Jose	37	31	11	85	221	214
Edmonton	33	37	10	76	206	218
San Jose	33	37	9	75	202	208
Calgary	25	40	14	64	221	245
Vancouver	25	40	14	63	195	258

Legend: W—wins, L—losses, T—ties, Pts—points, GF—goals for, GA—goals against. *—clinched playoff berth, **—clinched division title, ***—clinched conference title.

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RADIO

■ VOICE OF MUSIC

8:05 Pachelbel: Suite in D major (Musique Antiqua Köln); Corelli: Concerto Grosso in D major (English Concert / Pinnochio); Handel: Harp Concerto (Wildhorn); European Soloists (Emmentaler Bach): Bach: Sonata in D major (Ma / Cooper)

7:07 Haydn: Violin Concerto in D major (Zehetmair / Lisa CO / Rola); Clementi: Piano Sonata in B flat major (Demidenko); Mozart: String Quartet K173 (Pro Arte, Salzburg)

8:05 Beethoven: Piano Quartet in B flat (Schiff / Keller); Brahms: Trio for Clarinet, Cello and Piano op 114 (Evani / Bargmann, Volkov)

9:05 West: The Threepenny Opera (Lemay and other soloists / Berlin Radio Or and Cho / Bruckner-Ruggaber); Newman: Let The Horse Weill: The Seven Deadly Sins

12:00 Noon with Gideon Hod

14:08 Encore

15:00 Israeli Composers with Israeli Orchestras

15:00 Ancient Finnish Songs; Bach: Suite no 4 in G major; Mendelssohn: Piano Quartet op 3 (Domus); Taverner: The Hidden Treasures for String Quartet (Chilingrian); Wagner: 3 Motets (Westminster Cathedral Cho / O'Donnell)

18:00 Water: Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano (Eusebio Duto); Mahler: Symphony no 4 (Ruekkoff Birmingham SO / Raitta)

20:08 The Israel Quartet

20:08 Mahler: String Quartet no 1 in B minor; Mozart: String Quartet no 20 in D major (K499)

21:00 Claret, Celebration and Sirens

23:00 Art of the Song

HIDDEN

Continued from Page 16

On his return to Dublin, his key contact on the route to O'Dowd was the US ambassador there — Jean Kennedy-Smith, no less. The chain of information was well in place when the long-promised US envoy, ex-Senator George Mitchell, moved in and moved the game from the wings to center stage.

It is not surprising that the pro-British Unionist side in Northern Ireland seemed to be a bit stunned on and the defensive in trying to sell the peace accords to its followers. The unmistakable stamp of some brilliant Irish and Irish-American diplomacy lies upon the agreement, and even the British seem lost in admiration — though Blair too deserves great credit.

"This time," says O'Dowd, "this time, Irish America delivered the president of the United States, and through him the talks chairman, George Mitchell. Constitutional nationalism delivered the legislative framework, a superb set of negotiating officials and leaders like [Irish Prime Minister] Bertie Ahern and [northern Irish nationalist leader] John Hume at the most crucial time. Irish republicanism delivered two IRA cease-fires and leaders of the caliber of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, with the ability to bring their movement with them."

However, he cautions, "they too could fail, like [other great Irishmen] faced failure before them, not through any fault of their own, but because forces conspired to bring down a settlement."

Maybe, this time, the hidden persuaders will have done enough to

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- the Hamasniks of Ireland - against the peace process. The slippery slope was tiding dangerously downwards at an alarming rate. Irish police on April 2 intercepted a huge car bomb on a Dublin ship bound for England - probably for a massacre of innocents at the annual Grand National race meeting. It was a close run thing - by a miracle Ireland and England escaped an outbreak of bomb attacks like those in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, aimed to bury the peace process. The shadowy merchants of death did not halt the agreement the world has hailed as a stunning victory. There's a long way to go. *This is the last of three columns*

Inside

Three for McGwire

Page 21

Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

Jerusalem, Eilat up 2-1 in hoops playoff

by ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Remember Adi Gordon? Hapoel Jerusalem's captain, who's had more downs than ups this season, rediscovered his outside shot at Mafra last night, leading his club to a 68-60 victory and a 2-1 lead in their best-of-five National Basketball League quarterfinal playoff series.

Elsewhere, Hapoel Eilat edged Maccabi Rishon LeZion 74-72 at home to take a 2-1 lead in their series, while Maccabi Tel Aviv eliminated Maccabi Ramat Gan 3-0, with a 98-88 home victory, and Maccabi Ra'anana did the same to Bnei Herzliya, 95-76.

Jerusalem 68, Galil Elyon 60. Gordon scored 21 points, had a slew of assists, hit several long three-pointers, and played fine defense. He keyed a 7-0 second half spurt that propelled Jerusalem to a 44-35 lead that proved insurmountable.

The series continue Sunday in the north and at Rishon.

Israel's Fed Cup results

The national women's tennis team lost to Belarus 2-1 yesterday in their second match in the Federation Cup in La Manga, Spain. On Tuesday, Israel went down 2-1 to Greece.

Hila Rosen and Anna Smashnova lost in singles play. In the doubles, Rosen and Tzippi Obziler beat Nadejda Ostrovskaya and Tatiana Poutchek 6-3, 6-1.

Heather Chait

SCOREBOARD

European Cup semifinals (second leg): Monaco 3, Juventus 2; Borussia Dortmund 0, Real Madrid 0. Madrid advance 2-0 on aggregate.

(REUTERS) Haim Revivo scored a stunning winner from a free kick in the 82nd minute to give hosts Israel, playing with 10 men, a deserved 2-1 win over Argentina in a friendly yesterday.

The unimpressive Argentines appeared nervous at the start of the match as the two-time World Cup winners began their preparations for France '98.

Israel could have taken the lead in the 17th minute when Cypriot referee Costas Kapitanis awarded a dubious spot-kick after Revivo appeared to fall in the area.

Striker Alon Mizrahi's penalty hit the crossbar and Revivo's effort to head the ball from the rebound went over the bar.

Israel opened the scoring in the 64th minute when Najwan Grayev drilled an 18-meter drive into the net from directly in front of goal.

Israel did not panic despite being reduced to 10 men a minute later when Yossi Abuksis was sent off for a second bookable offense. But the Argentines managed to equalize in the 76th minute when Israel keeper Rafi Cohen fumbled a glancing header from Diego Cagna over the line.

Revivo's stunning winner came eight minutes from the end.

Just when it appeared as if Israel would be prepared to settle for the draw, Revivo fired a low thunderous free kick from 25 meters out on the left.

Argentine goalkeeper German Burgos was expecting the Celta Vigo player to cross to his teammates who had all converged on the right side of the goal.

Israel coach Shlomo Scharf was ecstatic at Revivo's performance. "If Revivo had been a South American, he would be worth \$30 million," the coach told reporters.

"We seem to find it easier to play well against the more technical South American sides than we do against the powerful Europeans," Scharf said.

"This is an historic win. It will take time to sink in, but I would gladly swap it for a draw in Vienna (against Austria in the upcoming European championship qualifiers)," he added.

Argentine coach Daniel Passarella said he was not surprised by the result. "Israel looked like a good side... (and) as for my team, they failed to play both as a group and as individuals."



THREE ON ONE - Israel defenders Amir Shelah (1) Jan Talasnikov (7) and Arik Benado (5) close in on Argentina's Gabriel Batistuta.

(Brian Henschel)

Grayev, Amir Shelah, Arik Benado, Ran Ben-Shimon, Jan Talasnikov, Haim Revivo, Eyal Berkovic (Walid Badir 69), Yosi Abuksis, Alon Mizrahi (Ronen Harazi 45).

ARGENTINA: German Burgos, Roberto Sensi, Mauricio Pineda, Gustavo Lombardi (Sergio Berti 69), Matias Almeyda, Pablo Paz, Diego Cagna, Gabriel Batistuta, Claudio Lopez, Marcelo Galarza, Rodolfo Cardoso (Arnaldo Ortega 45).

Spiegler chosen best of last 50 years

Mordechai Spiegler was yesterday named as Israel's best player since the creation of the State 50 years ago, according to a reader's poll in *Yedioth Aharonot*.

Spiegler was Israel's dominant strike force in the late 1960s and '70s. He led Israel to its only World Cup finals in Mexico in 1970 and is the highest goalscorer among all Israeli players, with 32 goals in 82 appearances.

He played mainly for Maccabi Netanya and with Olympique Marseille in the French first division. Following Spiegler in the voting were strikers Eli Ohana, Nahum Stelmach and Yehoshua Glazer and goalkeeper Ya'acov Hodorov.

All matches on Saturday at 16:30 unless stated: Maccabi Petah Tikva v. Hapoel Kfar Sava; Hapoel Be'er Sheva v. Ironi Ashdod, tomorrow 16:30; Bnei Yehuda v. Maccabi Tel Aviv, Haifa Quarter 17:00; Maccabi Haifa v. Be'er Jerusalem, Kiryat Eliezer 17:15.

Also, Hapoel Jerusalem v. Hapoel Haifa, Teddy Stadium tomorrow 16:30; Hapoel Tel Aviv v. Ironi Rishon, Bloomfield; Maccabi Herzliya v. Hapoel Be'er Sheva, Herzliya 17:00; Hapoel Ashdod v. Hapoel Petah Tikva, Ashkelon tomorrow 16:00.

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